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EVOLUTION
AND THE
NEED OF ATONEMENT

BY

STEWART A. McDOWALL, M.A.

TRINITY COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE

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INTRODUCTORY NOTE

BY

THE RIGHT REVEREND BISHOP RYLE,
Dean of Westminster.

MY friend, Mr McDowall, has allowed me the privilege of seeing this remarkable little book in MS. I have read it through carefully, and, I may add, with the greatest interest.

I cannot help thinking that his treatment of Evolutionary Science will be to many readers strikingly original and suggestive; while the theory, which he advances in connexion with his general scheme of thought, upon the Origin and Nature of Sin, and upon the subject of the Atonement, is, I am sure, entitled to the thoughtful consideration of the theologian, as well as of the scientist.

The fact that he has arrived independently at some of the conclusions which have become better known through the philosophical writings of M. Bergson, only adds to the interest attaching to Mr McDowall's study.

I am glad to call attention to a work, which it seems to me is of real value on religious philosophy, by a promising writer.

HERBERT E. RYLE,
Bishop.

THE DEANERY, WESTMINSTER,
June 8th, 1912.

PREFACE

IN writing this book I have only considered one aspect of the Atonement. Even so, I am conscious how incomplete, how rough and ill-composed, it will appear. It was thought out and written in the odd hours of a busy life, often with long intervals, and I fear it bears marked traces of this genesis. But it will be justified if in any way the thought outlined is of use to a few who, trusting in Jesus Christ, with a faith born of experience, yet feel deeply the difficulty of aligning the central tenet of the Christian Faith with their rational conviction that the evolution of animal life has always been from the imperfect towards the perfect, and not *vice versa*; who find it hard to face the question:—If sin is but inherited imperfection, how can we believe that man was ever wholly alienated from God because of sin?

The Atonement must always be beyond the understanding of finite minds. Any standpoint from which it is regarded may be, for the time and people, right and true; but we must never forget that the standpoint changes.

The consideration of the Atonement from the standpoint of an Absolute Ethic, and above all from that of Personality, has given, one might almost say, a new revelation. And so too, I believe, will a thorough

examination from the standpoint of Evolution. If what I have written can serve in any degree as the Prolegomena to such studies I shall have achieved the utmost I have dared to hope.

It will be observed that much use has been made of the great and suggestive work of M. Bergson in the region of the Philosophy of Evolution. Yet much that appears to be plagiarism is really parallelism. The substance of Chapter I was written in the summer of 1908, and published in *The Interpreter* for July 1910 under the title, "The Biological Argument for Theism." Much of the argument of this chapter, and especially the conclusions that a "divine unrest" must underlie the evolutionary process, and that the creature is always striving to attain greater freedom, while itself creating fresh conditions for itself and others, is almost identical with that developed in *L'Évolution Créatrice*. These conclusions were, however, arrived at quite independently: I knew nothing of M. Bergson's work till some time after this article was published, and the outline of the rest of the book roughly jotted down. But those who know M. Bergson's writings will realise what an enormous stimulus they gave to my rather inchoate thought, and how great a debt I owe to him in their final shaping. Mine was the rough, almost grotesque sketch of the untrained hand: his the strong, sure work of the master. It seemed worth while to refer to this, simply because two people, faced with the same

problem at about the same time, reached the same conclusions in several matters. Certainly, to find that another had travelled the same road, gave to myself great encouragement to go forward in my further journeyings.

Acknowledgement is due to the Rev. Hewlett Johnson, editor of *The Interpreter*, for his kindness in allowing me to make use of my article on "The Biological Argument for Theism." As I have already stated, this article forms the basis of Chapter I.

Finally, I would say that whatever of good may be found in this book has root in the influence of three people.

To my cousin, Margaret Benson, who taught me to think, and to care to think, my debt is lifelong.

To the teaching and guidance of my friend, Canon V. F. Storr, I am indebted for much of such knowledge of philosophy and theology as I possess: to his companionship and encouragement I owe even more.

To the advice and critical judgment of my wife, with whom every chapter has been read and re-read, the elimination of many obscurities is due. Without her constant help the errors of omission and commission would have been far more numerous than they now are.

To these three I dedicate this book.

S. A. McD.

WINTON,
August 1912.

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INTRODUCTION

As the title indicates, the main object of this book is not to offer a new theory of the Atonement. Rather it is intended to show that when the origin and history of man are studied from the scientific, and especially the biological side, the spiritual life, its partial failure, and the need for Atonement, far from receding into vagueness and unreality, are thrown into strong relief.

Thus, the biological argument for the existence of God; the underlying essential principle of the evolutionary process; the aim of the whole process—increasing freedom; the beginnings and biological nature of sin; the individual, self-conscious person; the theological nature of sin; the need of atonement, from the standpoints of theology and of biology; are developed as a coherent, logical sequence. I believe that such a method of treatment is not merely permissible; it has great reality and cogency, and, fully developed, would prove a valuable contribution to thought. In the last chapter certain points in regard to the Atonement are examined in the light of what has gone

before, and various suggestions are put forward in regard to their meaning and importance. Thus the book falls into two parts.

The first, and by far the longer, forms, I venture to believe, a logical chain of reasoning, leading to a definite conclusion—that when man's story is viewed in its biological aspect, the necessity of the Atonement emerges very clearly.

The second is far more tentative and suggestive. In it certain aspects of the Atonement wrought by Jesus Christ are considered briefly in relation to the argument developed in the previous chapters.

Two other points demand mention.

No attempt has been made to deal with the philosophical problem of Freewill. The existence of freedom in man has been assumed; indeed the increase of freedom is argued to be the *raison d'être* of physical evolution. The nature of Personality also has not received any adequate consideration. Many works are devoted to the consideration of these matters; the discussion of them would have been impossible within our limits, besides being hardly pertinent.

CHAPTER I

ENVIRONMENT AND EVOLUTION

THE biological conception we call evolution rests on the assumption, whose truth is attested by a vast amount of evidence, that organisms vary, and that those variations which tend towards the more perfect adaptation of the organism to its environment have the best chance of being perpetuated.

The four essential factors are *variability, heredity, overcrowding,* tending to the elimination of those organisms less suited than their kin to cope with their environment, and lastly the apparent *impossibility of retrogression.* That very many other factors have played a more or less important part in the evolution of the animal and plant world as we see it to-day is true. But for our present purpose we may confine ourselves to those we have mentioned.

Before proceeding further, it is necessary that we should examine carefully what exact meaning we propose to assign to the factors we have selected.

(I) Apart from any philosophical exactitude, it is quite clear to all of us that no two living organisms,

plant or animal, are quite alike. We may isolate a small group, all sprung from the same parents, and we shall still find differences; not perhaps any very striking ones, though this is by no means necessarily so, but at any rate peculiarities quite marked enough for us to differentiate individual from individual. We may go still further and examine individuals all produced at one birth, and still we find differences.

Some of these differences will no doubt be due to the diverse conditions under which the individuals live: we may plant two nasturtium seeds one against a north wall, the other against a south wall, and we shall find that the first becomes "leggy," climbs higher and higher seeking the sun, and produces few flowers and little fruit until it reaches the top of the wall, while the other develops flowers and fruit all up its stem; it is not with such differences we are concerned. The cause of them is obvious and superficial; they are acquired characters, and we shall leave them out of consideration at present. But the others are far more deep-seated; there seems to be no reason for them, and they have properties which differentiate them enormously in degree, if not fundamentally in kind, from acquired characters. Their cause is biologically unexplained, from the nature of the case biologically inexplicable; "it is a datum in the world of life[1]." They are due to something in the organism

[1] Cf. J. Arthur Thomson, *Heredity*, p. 100.

itself, and the property of producing them is inherent in all living matter. The direction of the variation of a group of individuals may possibly be determined to some extent by the surroundings of the parent organism, but there is certainly no immediate connection between the characters acquired by the parent and the variations appearing in the offspring. Of course as a rule[1] they are slight, and would appear trivial to a superficial observer, but none the less they lie at the bottom of all evolution.

(II) Now the characteristic property of these deep-seated differences, or variations properly so called, is that they are hereditarily transmissible. It is in this that they differ absolutely in kind, or at any rate so enormously in degree that for our purposes we may assume that the difference is in kind, from the acquired differences we have mentioned. It is not necessary or desirable to discuss the details of their transmission here: we are not concerned with biological controversies; the fact that on the whole these true variations tend to be transmitted to the offspring if both parents possess them, often if they are possessed only by one parent, is all that concerns us.

(III) But the total number of organisms, whether animal or plant, that comes into the world is inconceivably greater than the number that can eventually survive. A single turbot lays about nine million eggs

[1] Not always, as will be explained later.

a year. And so there comes about a struggle for existence leading to the elimination of the less fit. On the whole those that survive will be those that are in some way better fitted to cope with their environment than their fellows.

(IV) But suppose that some unforeseen change of conditions makes the line of development entered upon by an organism unsuitable? Could not an exactly opposite process take place, and the organism pass through the stages it has already traversed, in the reverse order, changing from the more complex to the simpler, till it reaches its starting point once again and is free to evolve in a more suitable manner? This would only be a kind of inverse selection, the less unfit organisms having the better chance of survival, and at first sight the process seems natural enough. But it does not occur, to any appreciable extent at all events[1]; more, it could not occur except sporadically for two reasons, as we shall see later. This is what we mean by the impossibility of retrogression, of a reversal of the order of evolution. It must not be confused with the familiar phenomenon of the atrophic degeneration of organs not used, an elementary example of which

[1] The question of the existence of what are called "retrogressive mutations" is not taken into consideration here. Biologists will realise that it does not affect the broad aspect of evolution, and so is of no importance to the matter in hand. For details of retrogressive mutations see Lock, *Recent progress in the Study of Variation, Heredity, and Evolution*, and *The Mutation Theory*, by H. de Vries.

is seen in the wings of the farm-yard duck, and an advanced stage of the same in the *kiwi* and *kakapo* of New Zealand and in the ostrich. Here the gradual reduction to vestiges is due simply to the combined action of lack of use leading to atrophy, and of intercrossing with absence of selection—what Weismann called panmixia.

Thus the earliest form of the Design-Argument, which found evidence of direct mechanical contrivance in every form of adaptation to the conditions of existence, has passed away with the growth of an understanding that such adaptation must *necessarily* be found on every side in a world where the only chance of survival lay in responsiveness to environmental conditions.

It has been superseded by the doctrine that the existence of progress implies an end; that the very idea of development is purposive, teleological, or it would be indeterminate, tending to no goal[1]; that design, in the sense of purpose, is to be seen in each stage of development in that each stage is a step towards an end; that the value of the stages is to be sought, at all events mainly, in their final interpretation. But if one may be permitted to use that very dangerous weapon,

[1] In this chapter the word *indeterminate* is used in the sense of vague, purposeless, almost chaotic. It is necessary to note this, as in a later chapter it is used, following M. Bergson, in the sense of free, not fore-ordained.

William Occam's razor, does not this doctrine contain something "praeter necessitatem"? Would a development not externally directed necessarily be indeterminate? And if not, shall we not have to look yet deeper before we can postulate Design even in the modified form of teleology?

Evolution is adaptation to environment. Why then should it be progressive and continuous? Why should not each set of organisms reach a dead-level of comparative perfection? The question could only arise from an imperfect conception of the term environment. Let us examine what we mean by it.

In its broadest sense the word connotes *all factors which can influence the organism, however remotely, not only in its present stage, but in all future stages.*

Thus it becomes clear that each adaptation which brings, let us say, a more perfect method of locomotion must bring the organism into relation with a whole series of fresh conditions, still part of its environment, which will in their turn require thousands of generations before perfect adaptation is reached. But we must go further than this. By its own changes the organism creates fresh conditions for itself and for other organisms. One can conceive that the evolution of the Greenland whale introduced very considerable additions into the environment of the jelly-fish and pteropods it feeds upon. Thus what one may call the environment-sum is never completed while development is

progressing. Each organism creates as it evolves, creates a new environment for itself and for others. To this also we shall have to return later.

Evolution now presents itself to us under a somewhat different aspect as the continual effort of the organism to reach equilibrium with its environment.

If it be true however that each minutest adaptation brings the organism into relation, to a greater or less degree, with a fresh series of environmental conditions, it must take ages for any organism to reach a *complete* equilibrium with a complex environment, and if the environment were itself increased, as we have seen is the case, complete equilibrium would never be reached; the organism would always be approaching perfection, but would never attain it. The curve of progress would be asymptotic. But positions of *stable* equilibrium might be reached without this complete equilibrium, i.e. without complete adaptation to the whole environment, for an equilibrium-position will be reached when further adaptation along the *particular line of development* would be disadvantageous. And these equilibrium-positions need not necessarily mean identity of organisation in the various organisms. For suppose two variations to occur at one given stage, neither being disadvantageous to the organism at that stage. Obviously each brings its possessor into fresh relations which will differ to a greater or less extent. This will necessarily lead to two divergent lines of

development—lines diverging without any *possibility* of ultimate approach, since approach would imply a less perfect adaptation to the *then* environment of the organism for the sake of an *ultimate* adaptation to a fuller and somewhat different environment; would imply retrogression; would imply a process involving a strange teleology indeed!

This explains the existence of side-lines of development, and involves too the *possibility* at least of a direct line of progress towards an absolutely complete adaptation, even if that can never be quite achieved. We must not forget however that each stage of development imposes fresh limitations, as well as supplies a fresh horizon for the organism. Thus for a given organism at a given moment there is a definite total environment, or set of conditions which can then, or may possibly in the future be able to, affect it; but each stage of progress, while introducing fresh conditions in the present, also reduces, perhaps to a very great extent, the number of possible conditions before included in its total environment which might affect it in the future, for there is no going back. For instance, when certain fishes began to take more and more to the land, they were gradually exempted from all the conditions of the sea-life which before had been a large part of their total environment[1]. To put it simply,

[1] What can we say, then, of a land-organism which once more betakes itself to the sea? Let us take for example the whale. It can

each stage of development circumscribes the future possibilities. It is clear from what has been said that the variation possibilities for an organism at any given stage are limited, and at each stage fresh limitations are imposed; so that although its actual environment, or acting-environment, may be increasing, yet its total environment, or the sum of all the conditions that can act on it now *or in the future* and make it evolve further, is becoming less. True, each organism *creates* as it varies and so makes for itself and for other organisms fresh conditions; but as time goes on more and more organisms being off the main line of evolution reach, or at least approach, an equilibrium position, and consequently the increase of these secondarily-created environmental conditions becomes progressively less.

Thus for a given organism at a given moment there may be a definite total environment, differing from the total environment of another organism, probably of *every* other organism, while yet one may speak of an ultimate "environment-sum" that comprehends all conditions. This "environment-sum" *must* include the "total environments" of all organisms, or their lowest

never return to true gills and fins of the same nature as, or as zoologists would say, homologous with, those of a fish. At best it can but develop similar or analogous organs, and it will be so far behind the fish in adaptation to marine conditions that its efforts may be regarded as hopeless: it has tried to turn back, failed, and is eventually added to nature's flotsam and jetsam, being incapable of further progress.

common multiple one might almost say, *but it may include another term whose magnitude cannot be determined, and which cannot be recognised since it has not yet begun to influence any organism.* And, as we shall see, this is of very great importance. Expressed algebraically, $\Sigma_e = a_e + b_e + c_e + \ldots + x_e$. But we have neglected to take into account that environment which is constantly being created by each organism. And here we are landed in a difficulty. Up to a certain point what is created is a function of the total environment of the organism, and we could complete our formula by adding $f(a_e) + f(b_e)$, etc. But there are functions not only unknown but unknowable, and here in reality our argument breaks down. This break is of the utmost importance, in its bearing on the matters we have to consider in a later chapter, for in it lies freedom. For the present however we may disregard it, and assume that our formula is complete.

On the one hand, then, we can imagine numerous positions of equilibrium under a given series of conditions, such as that, for example, we call marine. Yet, on the other hand, we can form a definite concept of what we mean by marine life, we can form the inclusive concept, as well as appreciate the included concepts, of the various equilibrium conditions of different marine forms. So also we can conceive of an intelligence whose concept of the environment-sum

in the cosmos is, within the limits indicated, complete.

* * * * * * * *

We may assume, for the sake of argument, that some form of marine life was the most primitive. Now when a marine organism begins to adapt itself in the direction of a littoral life, we have obviously a succession of environmental changes so marked as to produce a very rapid adaptation, for even the smallest change will be markedly favourable or unfavourable. The change to a life at first between tide-marks, then wholly on shore, must introduce such a vast series of new factors that an incredibly huge number of experimental variations must occur; some useless, some committing to one line of advance, some to another. Again, equally obviously, organisms that had gone very far in adapting themselves to certain conditions of marine existence, and so had committed themselves to a particular line of development, could not go very far under the new conditions, for retrogression is impossible; the majority would fail completely, some few would get on in a lowly way, their equilibrium-position being reached in a comparatively short time and comprising relations with a comparatively small range of environmental conditions. An example of this may be found in the littoral and land crustacea. The creatures that succeeded best would be those who adapted themselves completely to the *simpler* conditions of the sea, yet had

not committed themselves by over-specialisation, but were ready to respond to the new stimuli of the shore and the land. And in just the same way the land organisms which early reached their equilibrium-position—i.e. the position involving approximately *complete* adaptation to a small number of conditions—would again be incapable of what we call "progress" into a higher and more complex development. Thus we see that the organism[1] which becomes "highest[2]" is that which never reaches a stable position, but is always ready to respond to the fresh *higher* environment conditioned by its last progressive variation.

But, as we have said, the *direction* of evolution is enormously limited by the new environment. Thus in our example the main limitations lie in the direction of the methods of locomotion and of respiration.

Now on these lines of argument it appears that we have no need to postulate any *direct* teleological significance in the idea of progress: progress becomes simply adaptation to an automatically-increasing number of conditions. But it is noteworthy that it implies a "divine discontent," an unconscious rejection of any equilibrium-position, an unconscious recognition of the principle that equilibrium means failure, death in the

[1] Throughout this essay the word organism for the sake of brevity is used in two senses, firstly in its ordinary connotation, and secondly to denote a series originating in an individual organism.

[2] "Higher" environment of course can only be judged to be such by observation of its influence on the organism.

long run, when some unforeseen factor, due perhaps to other organisms that have not remained stationary, comes in, and the equilibrium is upset, and there is no power of regression. This last point is of great importance and we shall have much to say of it later[1].

It now becomes clear that our idea of evolution as the continual effort of the organism to reach equilibrium with its environment is inadequate, or at least presents only one side of the picture, for equilibrium means failure. Rather the organism is always endeavouring to respond to its environment, but in doing so it may open up fresh possibilities for itself. If it fails to do this it is doomed.

Thus far we have been following the lead of Biological Science; the idea of sudden variation-activity under new conditions is now universally conceded[2]. But in such cases, where there is a marked change of environment, not only is there a sudden outburst of variation-activity, but the individual variations are far greater, so much so that some writers use a special name, mutations, to designate them. The stock

[1] Cf. Bergson's discussion of the "splitting up of tendencies." *Creative Evolution*, pp. 124, 125. The correspondence between his *elementary tendencies* and the non-equilibrated positions we have been considering is very close.

[2] Cf. H. de Vries, *The Mutation Theory*, and Art. *Variation* in *Darwin and Modern Science*. An interesting forecast of de Vries' work from the theoretical side is to be found in the Romanes Lecture for 1894 delivered by A. Weismann, in the discussion of what he terms *intra-selection*.

example, because the earliest investigated, is that of *Oenothera Lamarckiana*, the Evening Primrose, which when grown in a rich soil was found by de Vries to be in a state of extraordinary instability, tending even in its natural conditions to vary between very wide limits; but many others are known, especially among insects and molluscs. Sometimes these mutations are due to environmental change, that is to external conditions, but often no reason for them can be assigned: they seem to be due to some internal impulse. Numerous sporadic examples of such cases were noticed and their importance recognised more than twenty years ago under the name of "discontinuous variations" by Bateson[1], who assigns to them a prime importance in the story of evolution.

Now let us imagine a "receptive" organism, that is, an organism capable of large responsiveness to environmental change, an organism on the main line of evolution, suddenly drifting to a new threshold, and now and again left stranded on a shore where new conditions, not of sun and air, but of supersensual influences act on it.

Is it pressing an analogy too far to suppose that a whole set of variations again limited in direction will be initiated, leading to a higher degree of consciousness and at last to self-consciousness? This last, giving the power of greatest response to the "new" conditions,

[1] *Materials for the Study of Variation.*

will lead up to the ethical and spiritual phenomena of self-conscious organisms. Such a sudden change—the appearance of phenomena different in kind from all that preceded them—would be nothing more than a marked case of "discontinuous variation."

Is it not possible, at the very least, that the reason for the appearance of moral and spiritual phenomena, for their sporadic and imperfect appearance in certain lower groups of animals whose colonial or gregarious habit has favoured their manifestation to a certain degree, their omnipresence and importance in the highest creatures, men, may be that the organism has developed to a stage when a fresh environment, more different in kind than even water and land conditions, is able to influence it? *It must of course be clearly understood that this environment has not suddenly come into being;* what has happened is simply that a fresh factor of the total environment has become operative owing to the organism having reached a stage where it can be influenced by that factor.

Looking at the matter from the other side, we must all admit that however we propose to account for them, moral and spiritual phenomena are characteristic of men, and in a minor degree of some animals; some of these are distinctly antagonistic to the *chacun-pour-soi* of material evolution; and yet unquestionably there is spiritual development and progress[1].

[1] See note at end of chapter.

Does not this fact of spiritual *development* demand a determining environment which must have some close relation with it? Does not an examination of the phenomena of evolution lead to the irresistible conclusion that there must be some "higher" environment to call out spiritual activities? If so, then environment *is* more complex than at first appeared, there *is* an x-factor in the sum; for, as has been said, it is impossible to conceive of development except in relation to environment, and unquestionably we have spiritual development.

Now just as the environment that calls out gills as a response must be a gill-demanding environment, so that which calls out spiritual phenomena as a response must be of a nature that demands spirituality. In other words a given environment evokes a *suitable* response, and conversely we can argue back from the response to the environment.

We are not strictly justified in saying that the environment is spirit, any more than we are justified in saying that the environment of our illustration is the essence of gill; but Biology will support us to the extent we have stated, and neither common sense nor Philosophy will offer much objection if we conclude that that which evokes a spiritual response is of the nature of spirit, essentially spiritual. Philosophy after all has used the argument before, and justified its use. And of course what we have said of the evolution of

spiritual phenomena is equally, and perhaps more demonstrably, true of mental phenomena.

So, taking biological science for our guide, we are led, through what will, I fear, appear to many a mazy path, to a belief in one environment which is the cause of all development physical and super-physical. Starting with the biological canon that development except in response to environment is impossible, and remembering that a sudden change in environment leads to an outburst of intense variation-activity along rather definite lines, we have been led to the conclusion that the appearance of spiritual phenomena in the animate world implies the existence of a vast environment to which spirituality is the suitable response. And reason decides that this environment can itself be conceived by the mind only in the category of the spiritual.

Again, our minds are able to understand or apprehend what is meant by the general term environment: we can form a vague idea of the environment-sum as a whole, even while we recognise that a full realisation of its content must always elude us. If we added together the content of the word for every individual organism at every stage of development, at best we should still be omitting all the terms we included under the symbol x in our formula.

But we can conceive of a transcendent mind which

could understand or apprehend the full content of the word, if we omit the conditions which are created by the organisms themselves (we must again insist on the importance of this reservation for our future discussion), and it would be of the same nature as our mind, though of a transcendent order. But a mind whose only function is to understand or apprehend cosmic phenomena is, if not unthinkable, at least irrational, absurd. But if on the other hand we imagine a Transcendent Mind which comprehends, enfolds, includes the environment-sum of the whole world—let us go further and say, which *is* the environment-sum of the whole cosmos, of worlds seen and unseen—we avoid the absurdity, and have at once an Absolute continuous in action, the cause of all things, whose activity is manifested in all phenomena and which yet transcends and includes them.

We have thus obtained "a graduated series or articulated organism, unified and completed by an idea which has none higher than itself, which is ultimate, which conditions all the others while it is conditioned by none[1]." And what is this but the well-known Platonic argument for God?

By purely biological reasoning, that is to say, we have reached a position from which the most rational, logical escape is to postulate a God in whom we live and move and have our being.

[1] Flint, *Theism*, p. 270.

We have seen, too, that teleology is not to be sought in the phenomenon of progress, for evolution could not be indefinite, indeterminate, since it is but an increasingly complete response to surrounding conditions, and becomes self-limited at each new step, as well as being creative. Continuous adaptation *must* give rise to the phenomenon we call progress. Instead of reading the series in the light of the end, we have to recognise in every stage a value, we have to admit each stage as an end in itself. If there is teleology it is to be sought in the existence of variation, in the existence of a *power* of progress that is, and not in progress itself[1]. With this in our mind, each stage of development becomes for us a microcosm, picturing in little the development of the whole animate world.

At first sight the realm of what we call chance may seem to be extended; but for the biologist chance has always played a great part. Now, on the other hand, instead of being an isolated inexplicable fact, chance is seen as in itself in a sense purposive, since the appearance of a favourable variation is no longer chance at any stage, but the working out of a huge sum in Permutations, which is bound to lead to the right answer in the end, is bound to result in the

[1] This corresponds no doubt in some degree with what Bergson (*L'Évolution Créatrice*) calls the *impulse* of life, but it includes the material basis on which the vital impulse works.

development of freewill and spirituality. For the environment is super-physical as well as physical; is all one. The mystery of the failures remains, but it is no greater than before. Spirituality *must* eventually appear under a spiritual environment. The creation *must* eventually work out its own salvation, through pain and fear and trembling, and appear at length in the likeness of God, the primal Cause.

Note. The analogy between spiritual and physical evolution becomes more striking the more one studies the phenomena. Thus, equilibrium-positions occur, indicating the highest development possible along side-lines of evolution; while the absence of such positions marks the direct line of progress. Animism, for example, finds its highest expression in the Ancestor-worship of Japan, the logical outcome of the animistic system called Shinto; while from the direct line of development which led to monotheism we find a branch which ends, after a little further progress, in Mohammedanism, and another diverging earlier from the main stem, and finding its resting-place in Buddhism, in addition to the main line which is traceable through Judaism, and which, by universal consent, finds its fullest expression as yet in progressive Christianity. Again, the existence of what may be termed discontinuous variation in the mental and spiritual sphere as well as the natural, when a race makes great advances under new influences, is well known. Many cases might be cited, as, for instance, Judaea during the Captivity, and again at the coming of Christ, Europe during the Renaissance, Japan and China at the present day. On the other hand, the fatal effects of national and religious stagnation, and of over-specialisation along wrong lines of development, are only too well known. Of these we shall have much to say later.

Objection may be raised to part of the argument of this chapter on the ground that too much stress has been laid on the influence of environment in producing mutations. It is true that de Vries worked mainly on plant-variation, and that animals do not appear to be as sensitive to environmental change as plants; but discontinuous variations and unstable species are well known among animals also,

and cases occur in organisms, like *Purpura*, which live on the threshold of a new environment. And it may legitimately be argued that since animals move, prey, and are preyed upon, these are the conditions which, being changed, are likely to lead to discontinuous variation; and these conditions do not lend themselves to experimental application. Moreover it seems likely that, under the influence of such stimuli, progress would be more rapid, and equilibrium would be reached more quickly and completely than in the case of plants. Hence we should not expect to find such marked cases of variability in essential features, under the circumstances. But the analogy of plants leads us to expect that what is an important factor in their evolution will not be wholly inoperative in the evolution of animals; and if it occurs at all, as it does, it will be most marked when the environment is changing most rapidly.

CHAPTER II

THE BASIS OF EVOLUTION

It becomes necessary next to look more deeply into certain questions raised in the last chapter, in order that we may see their relation to one another and realise clearly that we have to do with continuity. It will be well to begin by setting them down; we will then deal briefly with them in order, and finally summarise our conclusions, that we may see clearly how they are all linked together. We have to consider then:

(I) The characteristics and nature of the lower stages of evolution, (II) their fundamental cause, (III) the question of consciousness and self-consciousness, (IV) the creation wrought by the creature in the course of its evolution, (V) the higher stages: freewill as a product of progress, (VI) sin in relation to the evolutionary process.

(I) *The characteristics and nature of the lower stages of evolution.* Huxley, in a magnificent lecture

on "Evolution and Ethics[1]," expressed his conviction that the great world-process is not merely non-moral, but actively anti-moral. A survey of the inflexible hardness of the world-process, the gladiatorial nature of the strife, the apotheosis of success at another's cost, "the unfathomable injustice of the nature of things" as exemplified in the animal kingdom, drives him to a condemnation of the cosmic evolution as a whole. "Brought before the tribunal of Ethics the cosmos stands condemned: the microcosmic atom has found the illimitable macrocosm guilty." And looking back over man's thought of the universe he is struck by the fact that both in the East and in the West those schools of philosophy which considered the broadest issues of thought, which did not concentrate on the microcosm, through ethics, and so lose the key to a macrocosmic understanding, as did Socrates and Plato, were forced to the same conclusion[2]. For Gautama Buddha, the inheritor of the Brahmanic tradition, matter and mind alike were nought, the cosmic process was an evil from which Nirvana was the only rest; and so, not by asceticism so much as by the complete obliteration of the self that is one in nature with the world's struggle, man ought to seek deliverance from the wheel by reaching the state "when a man had but to dream that he willed not to dream, to put

[1] Romanes Lecture 1893.

[2] *Ibid.* p. 22.

an end to all dreaming." And Democritus and the Stoics, inheriting the tradition of Heracleitus, find too a warfare between the cosmic process and righteousness, from which the only escape is in *ἀπάθεια*. "By the Tiber as by the Ganges, ethical man admits that the cosmos is too strong for him; and destroying every bond which ties him to it by ascetic discipline, he seeks salvation in absolute renunciation[1]."

If we assume the premises, that is if, with the ancient evolutionist philosophers like Gautama and Democritus and with the moderns like Huxley, we see in the world a vain and hopeless struggle between two antagonistic processes, the ethical and the cosmic, in which the cosmic process must prove victor, there are two other solutions of the problem possible besides the pessimistic quietism of Buddhism and of the earlier Stoicism. The one which Huxley himself advocates is daring and audacious: to pit the microcosm against the macrocosm, the ethical against the cosmic, in unequal strife: a forlorn hope, perhaps hardly rational, but at least nobler than the other. It is the position which the pure agnostic, recognising and paying homage to the beauty of the ethical ideal, refusing to acquiesce in the triumph of evil, yet unable to find any key that will unlock the door of horn through which true spirits pass, must take. It hopes against hope that there may be hope, and so hoping

[1] Romanes Lecture 1893, p. 29.

erects an altar to the unknown God. This is to side with the weaker in an unequal struggle.

The other solution is to side, like Nietzsche, with the strong, to worship the cosmic process as exemplifying strength and success.

"What is good?—All that increases the feeling of power, will to power, power itself, in man. What is bad?—All that proceeds from weakness.

"What is happiness?—The feeling that power increases—that resistance is overcome.

"*Not* contentedness, but more power; *not* peace at any price, but warfare; *not* virtue, but capacity (virtue in the Renaissance style, virtu, virtue free from any moralic-acid).

"The weak and ill-constituted shall perish: first principle of our charity, and people shall help them to do so. What is more injurious than any crime?—Practical sympathy for all the ill-constituted and weak:—christianity[1]." Nietzsche has a chapter in *The Twilight of the Idols* headed "Morality as Anti-naturalness," and his conclusion is that Ethics must go, that Nature, the cosmic process, may have unhindered sway[2].

We have here three answers to the problem of the

[1] Nietzsche, *Antichrist*, § 2.

[2] It is worthy of incidental notice that Nietzsche neglects the fundamental altruism implied in the continuity of the germ-plasm, *vide infra*, ch. VII. Nordau rightly calls him the philosopher of egomania (*Degeneration*, p. 415).

macrocosm and microcosm. The problem itself is based on evolution, and the answer must recognise this. The first answer counsels quietism, the second a well-nigh hopeless struggle, the third a siding with the stronger, which at first sight appears to ensure success—of a sort.

But is this the only choice?

Professor Henry Jones in his inaugural address in the University of Glasgow in 1894, discussing the view put forward by Huxley, laid his finger on the weak spot in Huxley's argument. Huxley admits explicitly in a very important note that the evolution of ethics is part of the cosmic process[1]. How then, says Professor Jones, can it be so fundamentally opposed to the cosmic process if it is the outcome of it? We are offered a dualism in which one antagonistic principle arises from the other, Ormuzd from Ahriman, a continuity in name alone. "Between the natural process, which culminates in the savage, and the moral process, which begins with civilised man, there is a complete solution of continuity[2]." The system the critic offers is also a dualism, comprehended in a higher unity. We have the cosmic process, we have the ethical process; "the majesty of the natural world is the result of a combined endeavour, and the still more solemn majesty of the world of goodness is the product of the interaction of man with man, and of all men

[1] *Op. cit.* note 19. [2] *Ibid.* p. 21.

with nature." Only through and by the aid of nature can man's ethical intelligence become operative; nature herself being without knowledge is neither moral nor immoral, but neutral, non-moral. Pain and struggle, "an agony of endeavour," are the conditions of progress, but only pessimism, which is hedonism veneered, sees an eternal injustice in pain.

One cannot feel that such a solution is final. It congeals the surface of reality with verbal compromises over which the reason skates lightly, ignoring the depths below. But reason runs a risk: the ice is very thin.

There is another aspect of the question which at least does not ignore the depths, and with this aspect Bergson deals most capably in *L'Évolution Créatrice.* There *are* two opposing tendencies in the cosmos to-day, but they are not the moral and the anti-moral. The first, the great universal process, is the degradation of energy; its mathematical expression is known to scientists under the name of the Second Law of Thermodynamics. Put generally the principle may be enunciated thus: all energy tends to become less available. By available energy is meant the energy that can do work. The sun is cooling; this means that its heat is tending to a more uniform distribution, to become less available. A boiler over a furnace is more effective in driving an engine than a great lake—though the latter contains a greater quantity of heat

—because its heat is at higher pressure, so to speak. All energy in the long run tends to be degraded into heat, which in its turn tends to a uniform distribution, rendering it not available.

Whence then, we may ask, did the energy come in the beginning? We do not know. The physicist talks wisely about intra-molecular conditions, but he does not know. The philosopher has recourse to a Creative Absolute, but he can offer no direct proof. Bergson, by a subtle argument, which I confess leaves me rather cold, concludes that it must be extra-spatial and therefore immaterial[1]. He denies, that is, that any physical explanation could be absolute. But at least the philosophers can offer an efficient cause, while the naturalists at best suggest a more or less hypothetical cause which might possibly be efficient.

Now this phenomenon of dissipation of energy, or running down, is characteristic of everything that produces or tends to produce motion, as much of muscular motion or brain-motion as of the purely mechanical forms. For the sake of brevity we may borrow a word from the physiologists to describe it, *katabolism*. Katabolism then represents for us the process of running down, of the degradation of energy into (eventually) heat, whether it be a purely mechanical matter, in the physical world, or whether it be the

[1] *Creative Evolution* (Eng. Trs.), p. 258.

breaking down of animal products that supplies the energy for motion and muscular action in living organisms.

But in living matter alone an opposite tendency also is manifested. The animal can absorb fairly simple substances with a comparatively small energy-content, and by its own vital activity can build them up into the complex substances of which it is itself composed, whose energy-content is great. In other words, it is able to make a kind of animal gun-cotton whose explosion can be turned to practical account later on. True, the total amount of energy it stores up is not greater in quantity than the energy it receives from the divers food-stuffs it has absorbed, but it is so to speak at higher pressure. But in the long run the food it absorbs depends on plants: either it is vegetarian itself, or it feeds on animals who are vegetarians or have vegetarian prey. The plant however is able to take its food in almost the simplest possible form, from the gases of the air and the salts of the soil, thanks to the fact that it possesses a green colouring-matter which can utilise the energy of the sun. In the long run then, the energy which is stored up in the more and more complex explosives which have been evolved in the animal kingdom to enable the animal to react with more and more efficiency to stimuli, is derived from the dissipation of energy which is going on in the sun.

True; but as Bergson points out, the dissipation is checked, even in a measure reversed, by the animal. Borrowing again the corresponding term from physiology we may say that there is here an *anabolic* change —a winding up or storing of energy. And this is the most characteristic phenomenon of Life,—characteristic of life and of nothing else—that, side by side with the katabolic changes of the world, which it is powerless wholly to stop or reverse, we find anabolism, a process checking, even temporarily reversing, them.

In evolution then we see a constant warfare between the katabolic and anabolic principles, the katabolic prevailing always it is true—death always wins the victory over the individual—but at each successive stage the anabolic principle making a better bid for victory by forming more efficient energy-stores for the purpose of controlling more effectively the animal's destiny. And now the light begins to break.

Here is the "agony of endeavour" certainly, but the justification of the belief of Professor Henry Jones that "the optimist, while acknowledging that 'sorrow is hard to bear, and doubt is slow to clear,' may claim that, after all, the testimony of the moral consciousness means something; and that...the ways of the world, even though they tend to misery, are not unfathomably unjust"—this at the worst, apart from the positive gains of capacity for joy, capacity for music, capacity

for knowledge and the like—begins to emerge[1], and the belief itself to take shape.

There *are* two contending principles. At first the weaker, anabolism, gains ground steadily in spite of the victory of katabolism over the individual, which victory means death. But since Life first began death has never had the mastery. The individual dies as a whole, but certain cells of his body survive, uniting generally with a cell from another individual, and the life passes on down the ages. The silver cord is never loosed. For the individual there must be the pain of failure, there must always be the Sisyphaean effort to store up energy, to resist the downward tendency of that energy, the fruitless endeavour to stem the tide of katabolism. Hence the agony. But in the whole there is success; the life is perpetuated; all the katabolic effort of the world-process cannot withstand the slow advance of the evolving organism. The anabolic tendency persists: the weak succeeds, the strong fails. To this we shall have to return. At present our purpose in introducing it is to show that Huxley's antithesis between the world-process and the ethical principle does not go deep enough: later we shall find that we are led to deny the truth of the antithesis altogether. It is enough now that we have seen that the fundamental principle of evolution is the struggle between the katabolic and the anabolic

[1] *Op. cit.* p. 19.

tendencies, in which we find reason to believe that the ultimate victory is not to the strong. The struggle lies deeper than Huxley supposed, in the very beginnings of evolution.

(II) We have next to consider briefly *what is the fundamental cause of evolution.* In the last chapter we saw that once life is given, vital evolution as a first approximation may be defined as a response to environment, a strife after a complete equilibrium that is always receding as fresh factors of the environment come into play. And we saw too that an organism might, and often did, by permitting its own adaptation to a comparatively limited environment, reach a stable equilibrium, destined thenceforward to live on unprogressing until, in the course of ages, some change in its environment rendered it a prey to adverse circumstances and it perished, like the great reptiles or the giant armadillos of past epochs. In other words, we had to admit that within the organism there must be kept alive a divine unrest, an unconscious refusal to accept the present as the end, ever urging it forward or, eventually, annihilation must result. Bergson likewise concludes that there is something which he calls the *vital impulse*, urging the creation forward along the path of evolution[1]. For the sake of brevity and clearness we will adopt this term.

[1] When the chapter in question was written I was unacquainted with M. Bergson's writings: the conclusions were arrived at independently.

We see then that the vital impulse must be identified with a tendency to progressive anabolism, or at least that it is the cause of this tendency. But when equilibrium is reached the organism ceases to become progressively anabolic; it rests content as it is; it loses the vital impulse. And so, refusing to identify itself with the principle of progress, it re-identifies itself with the principle of degradation, of katabolism; having struggled laboriously a little way up the road to freedom, it gives up the strife, and since there is no possibility of rest, eventually suffers the inevitable doom. No longer identified with the anabolic process, it is overwhelmed and swept away by the katabolic flood, and perishes.

The cause of evolution then lies in this divine unrest, this vital impulse, this tendency to progressive anabolism; one might say this *continued* responsiveness to environmental conditions. Behind this thing, to which we have given various names as we looked at it from various aspects, there must lie a final cause, else how did it come to be? We have seen from the side of biology, as others have from the side of philosophy and of religion, that the final cause that seems to be indicated is God. As always, one is brought in the long run face to face with the necessity of a *causa efficiens* at the back of everything. But for our present purpose it is going far enough back if we take as the fundamental cause of evolution the

vital impulse that is found throughout the animate world.

(III) *The question of consciousness and self-consciousness.* I think we should not be wrong if we said that Bergson's explanation of the nature of the vital impulse was that it is the struggle of consciousness towards self-expression. He speaks of it as "the motive principle of evolution[1]"; as "a need of creation[2]"; he states that "the *rôle* of life is to insert some indetermination into matter[3]"; the main energy of life being spent in creating a sensori-motor nervous system which "is a veritable reservoir of indetermination[4]." Life to him is "consciousness launched into matter[5]." With the question of will that is introduced by the word "indetermination" we shall have to deal in the next chapter, and at present we will disregard it. The questions that concern us at the present moment are, first, the justification for thus identifying the vital impulse with consciousness: and, second, the relation of the Bergsonian consciousness, which is in its earlier stages unconscious, with the true developed consciousness, which is self-consciousness. And on the face of it it is obvious that these two questions overlap.

The answers are involved in his whimsical alteration

[1] *Creative Evolution* (Eng. Trs.), p. 192.
[2] *Ibid.* p. 275. [3] *Ibid.* p. 132.
[4] *Ibid.* p. 133. See note on the use of the word indetermination in next chapter, p. 40.
[5] *Ibid.* p. 191.

of the specific name of man—*Homo faber* instead of *Homo sapiens*. The first use man makes of consciousness is to devise tools, to form himself into a committee of ways and means, for the purpose of improving his lot. And all the evidence we possess seems to point to this as the chief aim of the evolutionary process. After all, this is but another way of saying that its aim is completer adaptation to environment; only, in the lowest stages there is no element of what we ordinarily mean by consciousness involved. But there is adaptation, the bending of matter to the ends of life, the creation of tools for completer, fuller living, always going on. When life is condemned to automatism, that is when an equilibrium-position has been reached, consciousness lies dormant, in the sense that it is no longer progressive; and, as when a stream has flowed into a back water, stagnation and decay follow. And this dormancy is in truth a coma, the prelude to death. But in the main stream there is always the progressive adaptation.

Now the meaning of all this is surely that there is continuity between the conscious tool-fashioning of primitive man—and indeed we may use the same words of many of the higher animal artificers—and what we must term the unconscious tool-fashioning, adaptation, in the lower forms of life. We may surely admit this without entering into the question of instinct and reason in the artifices of animals, which would

involve *inter alia* a discussion of Bergson's Intuitionism far beyond the scope of this book.

If then we see in the earliest acts of consciousness the same fashioning of tools, the same impulse towards the subjugation of matter, that we recognise as the characteristic of all evolution, we are surely not wrong in predicating the continuity of consciousness with the vital impulse that urges on the organism to this same subjugation of matter. And if there is continuity the differences must be in degree and not in kind[1].

But between consciousness in this sense and self-consciousness there *is* a break. In the first the creature recognises the value of tools, in the second he realises himself as the maker of tools, and as other things. It might easily be argued that the break is in a measure apparent only, being due to the gradual change of the sphere of action of the vital impulse, which in lower forms is directed mainly towards matter, while in higher forms it becomes inwardly directed towards the perfecting of itself. This idea seems to underlie Bergson's discussion of the bifurcation of consciousness into intellect and intuition. (See especially *Creative Evolution*, pp. 191, 192.) And it seems to me that there is considerable justification for such an argument. The great point to keep in view is that, without committing ourselves to a statement that the method is

[1] See ch. vi. pp. 128, 129.

absolutely continuous, we are bound to recognise that the aim is continuous. The creature directs his energies towards the making of tools, at first in obedience to a blind impulse, later with open eyes, and last of all he realises himself as a maker of tools. But he does not then cease to make them: on the contrary he bends a fuller energy to his task.

The object of the impulse all through is one: completer adaptation to surroundings. In the lower forms this is blind reaction, if you will, between environment and matter animated by the vital impulse. But higher up in the scale some sort of recognition of the aim is manifestly present, together with a recognition of some of the environmental conditions with which the organism has to cope. And still higher, as we have seen, the response is conditioned by quite new-acting factors, the recognition of which seems to me to involve necessarily a realisation of interdependence between means and ends, that is between, not tools and ends as heretofore, but tool-*making* and ends, which recognition is surely the beginning of self-consciousness. A discussion of self-consciousness is impossible however without a consideration of self-determination or freedom of action, which belongs properly to the next chapter. We shall return to this matter briefly there, but it is beyond the scope of this work to do more than suggest lines of thought which may prove helpful.

To sum up what we have said in the present chapter. We saw first of all that the older view of the cosmos which sees a struggle between the cosmic and the ethical processes does not go deep enough. Only three solutions of the problem thus stated are possible, the quietism of Gautama and the Stoics, the hopeless, aimless, noble struggle of Huxley, the anti-altruism of Nietzsche; and besides there is the patient optimism of Jones, not really very different in kind from Huxley's pathetic hope that

> ".....something ere the end,
> Some work of noble note may yet be done."

We have seen that the struggle really lies deeper, in the deathless upspringing of the anabolic process that death cannot kill. Katabolism conquers in the individual, but in the race the anabolic process is victorious.

We then considered Bergson's identification of the vital impulse with consciousness; and finally from the side of unity, or rather of continuity, of aim, we tried to show that there was evidence for the derivation of self-consciousness from the blind impulse of life.

In the next chapter we have to discuss the creative power of the evolving creature. This has been so masterly dealt with by Bergson that we shall again follow him largely in the earlier part of the chapter.

CHAPTER III

EVOLUTION AND FREEDOM

(IV AND V) *The creation wrought by the creature in the course of its evolution;* and *freewill as a product of progress.* In a previous chapter we noticed that "by its own changes the organism creates fresh conditions for itself and for other organisms" (page 9), and in regard to this we made two comments, firstly, that as more and more organisms approach a condition of equilibrium the increase of these secondarily-created environmental conditions becomes progressively less (page 9), and, secondly, that although "up to a certain point what is created is a function of the total environment" yet when the consciousness becomes in any degree self-conscious, and perhaps earlier, the value of these functions becomes not only unknown but unknowable (page 10). This last conclusion, though arrived at quite independently, is identical with M. Bergson's view already quoted that "the

rôle of life is to insert some indetermination[1] into matter. Indeterminate, i.e. unforeseeable, are the forms it creates in the course of its evolution. More and more indeterminate also, more and more free, is the activity to which these forms serve as the vehicle. A nervous system, with neurones placed end to end in such wise that, at the extremity of each, manifold ways open in which manifold questions present themselves, is a veritable *reservoir of indetermination*" (*Creative Evolution*, pp. 132, 133).

Why do we arrive at this conclusion? Often the fresh environment created by the evolving organism is the necessary consequence of its own evolution, and is therefore a function of the pre-existing environment which could be prophesied by a kind of process of extrapolation, as mathematicians term the continuing of a curve from what has gone before. But as soon as the active designing of tools comes into play, as soon, that is, as there is a choice of method for the completer adaptation to conditions; or, to speak more exactly, as soon as there is the possibility of choice of the particular conditions of the total environment that shall receive the next response; there is unquestionably indetermination, not perhaps as to the *direction* of the next move, at any rate in the lower stages, but as to

[1] We would remind our readers that *indetermination* is here used in the sense of freedom from law, and *not* in the sense we give to it in a different connection in chap. I. See note, p. 5.

the exact method that will be adopted to compass some end; for it is impossible to conceive what will be the solution of a dilemma before the dilemma is solved. We cannot stay to discuss the truth of this last statement here: reference may be made to the third chapter of Bergson's *Essai sur les Données Immédiates de la Conscience* (Eng. Trs. by Pogson under title *Time and Free-will*) and to James' "Dilemma of Determinism" in *The Will to Believe*. Throughout this essay we shall have to assume the *possibility* of freedom: our only concern will be whether this possibility is actualised in life. But of this we shall have more to say shortly.

The creature, then, comes into a world, where it is at once constrained on almost every side by blind forces with which it cannot cope, which compel it to follow an assigned path whose direction is indicated by the past; and each step it takes along the destined way adds many more constraining forces. Yet the path has no reality till it has been traversed. Behind, it lies clear, hedged in with conditions that make it appear inevitable that it should have been exactly what it is. But in front the possible paths spread fanwise till the next step causes the waiting environmental forces to close in, like bushes in a dream-hedge, marking clearly the traversed road and making what seemed a moment before indeterminate, clear and inevitable, as if it had been a road laid out from eternity.

Nevertheless, the *direction* is indicated by the trend of the traversed way: there will be no sudden doubling back, no sharp turn; but yet the future at each moment is still in a large measure indeterminate. Does this seem to contradict what we said before about evolution not being indeterminate[1], about the *necessity* of progress as a result of response to environmental conditions? Surely it is not so. The evolutionary path of the organism is roughly predetermined by the past, but at each moment it is indeterminate in many details; yet each step reduces this indetermination, *unless* the organism has chosen the true direction of progress, the line towards completer anabolism, the road to emancipation of the consciousness, to self-determination. And the stimulus that drives the organism to wander forth is that same impulse which we have identified with consciousness. Thus progress is rendered inevitable in the long run by the fact that the organisms which "choose" other paths find themselves involved in a blind alley, which implies that failure which the organism is striving to avoid, its re-snaring in the toils of katabolism. *For the organism itself there is some measure of indetermination, for the race, apparently, none.* We must not press the analogy of our illustration, but it serves its purpose to show to what extent there is determination, to what extent indetermination.

[1] In the sense in which the word is used in Chapter I.

As the creature evolves, then, it creates: not only does it create for itself a path: that after all is a kind of retrospective creation: is hardly a creation at all; but it marks out its path for the future in some measure. Further, by its very progress it actually creates fresh conditions in its own total environment and in that of other creatures. To take a crude instance: suppose it develops in the direction of speed in order to capture its prey. Its new swiftness will enable it to capture other animals it could not catch before, and so its diet, and thence its habits, may be considerably changed. And the effect of this on any other beasts it preys upon is manifold. Some may tend by natural selection to become more swift; some will take refuge in thick woods, others in protective colouration; and this again will affect their prey, and so in ever-widening circles. Of course the illustration is a crude one, but it may serve to point the argument. The important fact is that the variation adopted to avoid the determinate katabolic enemy introduces fresh conditions into the environment of others. The whole idea, though in a more subtle form, permeates Bergson's conception of the cosmic process, and his treatment of it is so full that we cannot do better than refer the reader to his treatise. The only points it is necessary to bring out for our purpose are these:—that each step, though conditioned largely by the past, is yet in a measure self-determined:

that even in the lower stages each step not only determines, but actually in part creates, certain conditions of the future total environment for itself and for other organisms; and that the higher we go the more effective becomes this creative power.

It is quite clear that the influences due to organisms cannot exist until the organisms themselves are brought into being. In this sense it is obvious that we are justified in speaking of the creation of environment by the creature. But in many cases the nature of this creation could be prophesied: the development of protective mimicry in one race must tend to the increase in distinguishing power in another race which preys on it: here a new factor of elusiveness is introduced into the total environment of the individuals of the second race, and produces its corresponding reaction by the ordinary means. But that the first race should indulge in the vagary of protective mimicry in order to save itself from death, however rational it seems when it is done, is surely unforeseeable. There were so many other more simple ways of escape. From the point of view of the second race at any rate an entirely unforeseen, unforeseeable addition to the environment has been created. From any point of view it is hard to picture this step as foreseeable. It is an action of the unconscious consciousness for the purpose of making use of lichens, or grass, or what-not, for self-protection; in a sense it makes a tool of them.

And what of the Fishing Frog (*Lophius piscatorius*) which converts a fold of skin on its head into a rod and line and worm, and lies hidden in the mud beneath the bait till some unwary fish falls victim? What of his deep-water relative *Melanocetus Murrayii*, who, living in the dark, keeps a trembling spark as bait at the end of his line, to delude the unwary fish into the belief that here was a luminous crustacean whose locomotive organs had gone wrong? What of the South-American beetle-larva that develops a five-clawed hand on one of its legs and a gridiron on its body, by means of which it produces a shriek like a slate pencil to tell its mother it is hungry? What of the Sphex which paralyses its caterpillar victim by nine several strings in the nine nerve-centres so as to provide its young with living food? Surely this is tool-making, even if not of a fully conscious kind. And what of the monkey that weaves a shelter over its head to keep off the rain? What of the tailor-bird that searches for a fibre with which to sew other leaves together? Are we to say that all these were wholly determinate, foreseeable? One could readily construct a series beginning with a non-conscious shaping of customs to suit ends, and going on without any break to cases of absolutely unquestionable tool-making from external objects, done consciously by man. These last are certainly not foreseeable, if there be such a thing as freedom possible: only a very strong obsession in

favour of determinism could deal with them as wholly products of circumstances; and the series from these downwards—and upwards—is complete.

It may perhaps be said that all these cases may be simply questions of experimental variations, of which the suitable ones get selected; and that the appearance of voluntarism that some of them have is simply the result of this selection of what is suitable; and that if, on the other hand, one admits that some of them are ingenious inventions of the individual, one is landed in Lamarckianism, since one is tacitly introducing the inheritance of acquired characters.

But if we are not deterministsand we assume we are notwe know that certain of our actions are free, that we are often free to shape and choose the tools or means whereby we may realise some particular desire or need. In other words, man the workman can to some extent choose his tools. But dogs, and elephants too, shape and choose tools to subserve ends, and so do monkeys. As we go down there is no possibility of drawing a definite line between a choice of tools that has something of the voluntary in it and one that has not. Only, down at the bottom of the scale, we say that the light-sensitive pigment spot of a *Euglena*, which enables it to regulate its movements, is but a localisation, evolved by selection on the normal lines, from the diffuse phototactic sensibility that is characteristic of many aquatic organisms. Thus we must recognise the

fact that, as so often in nature, we cannot draw a line: there is continuity: there are no real gaps between such instances as this and the ingenuity of the skilled human being. The determinist will welcome this conclusion, but he will still be face to face with the dilemma of determinism in man. If, however, on philosophical grounds, we throw aside materialistic determinism, and recognise that there is freedom in the human being, we are forced by this very continuity to conclude that in all life there is something of freedom, even in response to environment; that is to say, that there is some choice of the environment to which there shall be response in cases of dubiety. In other words, we must conclude that life is a plastic entity that can be moulded by its environment, but yet in which there is an impulse which is always tending to one end, anabolism, and opposing the determinate nature of the katabolism in the inanimate cosmos.

This is of such fundamental importance that we must, at the risk of repetition, go into it in more detail.

Where does the factor indetermination come in in the interplay of variation and selection?

We have seen in Chapter I that progress is inevitable, owing to the existence of a spirit of unrest in the organism which itself is always being urged towards an equilibrium. This equilibrium is reached early by some which go up blind alleys, but those which follow the path of progress, which is the path

towards adaptation to the "highest" environment, can never reach equilibrium, and so they progress. *Indeed we may say that the environment is always urging towards equilibrium, from which the organism is always seeking to escape.* Hence comes an element of purposiveness in the variations, an element of freedom. It is here, in the recognition, unconscious if you will, of the fact that equilibrium involves death, that an element of indetermination, opposing the determinism of the cosmos, comes in; and stated thus it is obvious that no taint of Lamarckianism is in the conception. It is a misuse of terms to speak of the ingenuity of the individual in this connection. The whole phenomenon is the result of the strife of the underlying anti-determinate, anti-katabolic anabolism which is life, and which is here simply coming to the surface in the individual.

It has been impossible in the foregoing discussion to keep the idea of the creation by the individual separate from the indetermination which renders that creation possible. But having cleared the ground we can now develop the argument on these matters briefly and definitely.

(IV) *The creation wrought by the creature in its evolution* is then of two kinds, apart from the apparent creation of a determined path for itself to which we have alluded, which is in truth no creation, but rather what we may call the resultant of the

interplay of the forces of environment and variation. In the first place there is the foreseeable creation of the conditions, for example, that will arise for a group of organisms, following on an increase in speed of pursuit of another group of organisms that prey on them. They will have to hurry up.

For the first as for the second group these fresh environmental conditions were predicable from what went before. They were functions of the pre-existing environment, unknown, created by the organism, for they were not existent in the previous environment-sum; but yet their creation could have been prophesied by that same process of extrapolation.

(V) *Freewill as a product of progress.* On the other hand in the *making of tools*, that is in the action of compelling inanimate objects to subserve the ends of the organism, there is unquestionably a factor introduced that is not foreseeable. That a bird should hide its nest, should make it of such materials as to be inconspicuous is easy enough to understand; but that a bird should sew other leaves together to make an inconspicuous nursery, is surely hard to conceive as foreseeable? In the making of tools *by man* there is certainly freedom, creating a fresh environmental factor for the fishes which are tempted by an artificial fly, or the pheasants which are shot; and, as we have already said, where is one to draw the line in the lower stages of evolution?

If our analysis be true, there is then throughout the animal kingdom—the vegetable kingdom does not concern us in this discussion—an element of freedom, which is an essential factor in the anabolism of living matter, enabling it to stem the tide of katabolism, to oppose the determinism of the cosmos that tends always towards the degradation of energy. This element of freedom itself develops as the organic world escapes more from the trammels of matter, becoming capable of increasing expression as the creature becomes more and more able to bend matter to its own uses, to make tools. At last, when man, the supreme artificer, comes into being, the effort of the consciousness is directed towards other ends besides the subjugation of matter: it seeks self-expression. Becoming directed inwards upon itself it changes from consciousness to self-consciousness. Man the artificer begins to know himself, to recognise his own partial freedom, and to seek to perfect it. In this way an element of will comes into play; the indetermination that was manifest throughout the evolutionary process, which led, blindly it is true, to the rejection of equilibrium and so to progress, becomes now a *voluntary* striving towards self-realisation, as well as a conscious effort to cope with and master matter: to make matter the servant of the conscious being. Doubtless we find attempts at voluntary control far lower down in the scale, but these never achieve more than a very limited and

fitful success in any animal but man; the animal has not achieved its destiny, has yielded in a measure to the seduction of a restful equilibrium, has in a measure subscribed its acquiescence in a rest from endeavour which means death[1], and so is unable to respond to its own strivings towards self-realisation in any large degree.

Let us now summarise our conclusions so far, to see whither we are being led.

The facts of Biology lead us to two conclusions; first, that although progress is but response to environment, yet, given the instinctive rejection of equilibrium-positions, the organism must pursue an apparently definite evolution, just as if its path were predetermined; and second, that since no evolution, even allowing for the existence of the vital impulse, can ever take place except as response to environment, there must be some suitable environment to call out the phenomenon we call spiritual progress.

In Chapter II we went more deeply into the question of this vital impulse. We found that the warfare, in which Buddhists, Stoics, Gnostics, Christians and

[1] If it be objected that we have no right to say the other mammals are any less successful in their own way than man, the answer is simple and complete: the new factors introduced into their environment by man have led to the extinction of many, and would lead to the extinction of many more but for the lately-evolved ideal of pity. Where is Steller's Sea-cow? Where the aurochs and the bison? Where the sabre-tooth tiger? Where the dodo, and countless other forms?

Agnostics alike saw the struggle of two evolutionary processes, the Cosmic and the Ethical, lies deeper than this, in the struggle of the life process which seeks freedom, against the dissipation of energy that is the essence of the determined material world. In the next three sections there was much overlapping and some repetition, but their object was to show the continuity of aim that underlies all progress, namely the increasing self-determination of the consciousness, until it wakes at last into self-consciousness. The creature eventually recognises its own aim, to subject matter to its own will, and progresses fast, till at length, turning inward on itself, it realises that the object of it all is something different from everything else, the emergence of deathless life: that everything which had seemed an end was but a means to this: that the creature was no longer *Homo faber* but *Homo spiritus*, able to see a meaning in the long history of past struggle; able to recognise in himself not merely a vehicle of the life but a person, not a drop in the stream of things but a voluntary bearer of the torch; able to understand what was the environment to which he had been responding since he was a fragment of primordial protoplasm; able to see in Whom he lived and moved and had his being. For a recognition of personality comes directly there is an inturning of the consciousness upon itself; self-consciousness is a recognition of the self as an entity, which recognition lies at the bottom of personality.

In this, it seems to me, lies Bergson's weakness: he has lost sight of personality in his flux of intellect and intuition, the dichotomised branches of consciousness. And as soon as there is a realisation of personality, the demand for an understanding of its meaning must follow. It seems to men that personality must have its counterpart in the great world forces. And so we get attribution of transcendent personality to almost everything that is alive, whether tree or ox, and to many things that are inanimate (which personality may persist after the death of the material body), as well as to the great natural forces, the winds, the thunder, and the rain. As the conception of personality grows clearer these promiscuous attributions cease, but a race never becomes free from the need of attributing personality to something outside the individual man: personality is in itself such a definite and peculiar thing that it must have some explanation that appreciates its value and does not regard it as a mere by-product. True, individuals by a strenuous course of self-discipline have managed to arrive at "a condition of impassive quasi-somnambulism, which, but for its acknowledged holiness, might run the risk of being confounded with idiocy" as Huxley expresses it, in which the sense of personality can be successfully obliterated; but does anyone imagine that to the average men of the Buddhist races their religion means anything more than a passive quietism equivalent

to the quasi-Christian idea of "short toil, eternal rest"? I for one cannot believe that an ordinary Buddhist does not regard himself as a person; and the corruptions of Buddhism that pass current to-day show very clearly the need of concession to the natural human demand for some kind of transcendent personality.

Moreover, this demand is not a superstitious one: it is not only the untutored mind that seeks for a *causa efficiens* of the subtler attributes of personality outside the bounds of material evolution, even outside the bounds of an emotionless Absolute. Is there any reason why we should not extend our argument further and say that the evolution of personality is the suitable response to the spiritual environment we have found it necessary to postulate? Surely this is necessarily true. And if so, there are certain attributes of personality, such as love, "understandingness," reciprocativeness, reason, that seem to demand attributes of the like kind in the spiritual environment that has evoked them.

One cannot here entrust oneself to strictly formal proofs: as Bergson would perhaps contend, the matter lies outside the domain of pure intellect: it can only be approached successfully by intuition[1]. But it remains true that in all cases where the human mind has not relied too completely on pure intellect, and in so doing

[1] *Creative Evolution*, pp. 186, 192.

in a measure lost sight of personality even in man, it has found it necessary to endow the Transcendent Absolute, or whatever we choose to call it, with Personality. At first this may seem contemptible as an argument, unstable as a foundation on which to build anything; but I believe the more one thinks of it, the more one realises that, though it may be a poor argument, it is *true*. Personality is existent in man, though we cannot easily define it, and it does demand similar attributes in God, if God is to be more than an intellectual abstraction.

(VI) *Sin in relation to the evolutionary process.* We must now pursue our train of reasoning to its logical issue and see to what conclusions we are driven. We have said that all life is a struggle between two processes, the anabolic and the katabolic. The essence of the katabolic process is determination: we are here dealing with a clock that has been wound up, it matters not how, and is now running down, every wheel performing an appointed task with no possibility of variation. Where there is degradation of energy there is in fact complete determinism. But opposing this universal principle of degradation we have the anabolic tendency of life, able, at least temporarily, to stem the tide; involved in matter which has eventually to yield obedience to the sovereign sway of Death—Death, that represents the triumph of katabolism over life's corporal trappings—yet always

triumphing in a measure, compelling a small portion of that matter to remain subject and to act as the vehicle of the life itself, which cannot die; a progressive thing.

And so the real victory is not to the strong. But if once an organism allows itself to drift into acceptance of an equilibrium-position, if, that is to say, it disregards the urgings of the consciousness or vital impulse, which urgings are the expression of the fact that life is progressive anabolism and nothing else, it ceases to identify itself with life, rests, and finally drifts into the stream of katabolism and is swept away. The life has gone, and there is only matter which is subject to degradation. There may be a pause, as when a disc is balanced on the apex of a pyramid, for there is equilibrium. A lifeless anabolism, if I may use the term, an empty semblance of true life, where the processes of growth, individual death, and the passing on of the vital principle through a small particle of matter, remains; but there is nothing progressive in it; it has lost the power of increasing indetermination; the vital impulse is dormant, but the sleep is coma presaging death. Some change of environment comes—either the degradation of energy in the surrounding world upsets the balance as it proceeds, or else it is altered by some new factor introduced by the indeterminate life of other organisms; at any rate the equilibrium is upset, and the living matter that had made

terms with the principle of death is swept down by the overwhelming stream.

Thus the death of the *individual* seems the natural outcome of a struggle in which the vital impulse is unable to bear up so large a quantity of matter against the stream, and so yields to the necessity of the moment, gives up a great part of the matter to death, and only retains that small quantity which is necessary for its own manifestation. But the death of the *race* is different wholly. It is the result of compromise with katabolism. The life makes treaty with the forces of decay, stipulating, so to speak, for a comfortable unstrenuous existence, and so unconsciously identifies itself with their ends by resigning its own. In other words, the race renounces the ideal of progressive anabolism which alone is able to withstand the cosmic flow, and so it too becomes involved in the fate that attends all matter and all energy—for matter is but crystallised energy, the cyclic perpetuation of stresses.

In what we have just said our thoughts were directed towards what in the ordinary sense of the word we should call unconscious organisms. But, as we have seen, this same anabolic impulse which we, with Bergson, have agreed to identify with consciousness, becomes freer and freer the higher we go in the scale, until it becomes clearly self-determination, conscious tool-fashioning. And then at last man the artificer

becomes man the spirit: the consciousness, becoming inwardly directed on itself, becomes self-consciousness. As soon as this stage is reached man may be said to become a living soul: man, *Homo spiritus*, has now his destiny in his own hands in a large measure. He has reached a stage when a higher environment, a spiritual one, can act on him. And, having achieved a large measure of conscious self-determination, he is able to aid his own progress voluntarily: he has the power of *voluntary* response to environment.

But it *is* voluntary. He may choose not to respond. He may prefer to remain comparatively un-spiritual. He may prefer not to progress. This is what we ordinarily term *sin*—the choosing of the lower rather than the higher of two possible courses. But is it not, in essence, the acceptance of an equilibrium-position, the voluntary repudiation of the anabolic principle, the identification of the will with katabolism? And we have seen that in the lower stages this meant death. Is it, then, that sin is essentially the identification of the will with death? It is with this thought that we shall be concerned in the coming chapters.

CHAPTER IV

THE ORIGIN OF SIN

THE publication of Tennant's Hulsean Lectures on Sin[1] in 1902 marked an epoch for many minds. To the ordinary thinking Christian these lectures represented a new thing: a courageous attempt to face the problem of the nature of sin in the light of evolutionary science. To some the attempt seemed not wholly successful. Objections were urged from the side of philosophy as well as that of theology: some of these objections are discussed by the author in the Preface to the second edition.

But whether it can be said that Dr Tennant has offered a completely satisfactory account of the matter or not, at least he has broken new ground in his two books on the subject of Sin and formulated certain main principles that seem to have a very firm evidential basis and that are supported by strong collateral evidence[2], principles that seem likely to afford waymarks

[1] *The Origin and Propagation of Sin.* Ritschl, and Pfleiderer, had previously dealt briefly with the problem of Sin on somewhat similar lines.

[2] Especially the critical investigation of the origin and growth of

and guide-posts to set the feet of others on the highway that leads to the city of truth. The first book is so well known that it is unnecessary to follow out the line of argument: it will suffice to give two quotations which summarise the conclusions to which the author is led.

"Morality consists in the formation of the non-moral material of nature into character; in subjecting 'the seething and tumultuous life of natural tendency, of appetite and passion, affection and desire' to the moulding influence of reflective purpose. Here, and not in any universal and hereditarily transmitted disturbance of man's nature, is to be found the occasion or source of universal sinfulness. It is simply the general failure to effect on all occasions the moralisation of inevitable impulses and to choose the end of higher worth rather than that which, of lower value, appeals with the more clamorous intensity. And if goodness consists essentially in this steady moralisation of the raw material of morality (i.e. as the note explains, what is supplied both by sensibility and reason), its opposite, sin, cannot consist in material awaiting moralisation, but in the will's failure completely to moralise it[1]." And again, "The solution which has been suggested does not secure consistency at the price

the Fall-Doctrines. See *The Sources of the doctrines of the Fall and Original Sin.* F. R. Tennant.

[1] *Op. cit.* pp. 109—110.

of surrendering any of the truths to be explained. The possibility of sin, the instruments of sin, and the temptations to sin, are derived partly from our common nature: that is the essential truth which Augustinianism, supplied with deficient science and philosophy, misrepresented. The actuality of sin is derived solely from the individual will influenced by its social environment: that is the truth which Pelagius abstracted from its proper relation to the solidarity of mankind in the non-moral material of sin. Solidarity and guilt each finds its recognition in the theory of sin involved in the account of human nature which science has now supplied to theology as a basis for its doctrine of Man. And the denial of inborn sin by this newer theory, in the sense in which those words are properly taken, is accompanied with a strong insistence on man's need of grace[1]."

Sin then is failure, but it is *conscious* failure. An individual fails to act up to the best that he knows, and by failing sins. If he had not known, his failure would not have been sin. "I had not known sin but by the Law."

To many the representation of sin as, at any rate primitively, a negative thing has raised grave doubts as to whether Dr Tennant has really reached the bottom of the question; and the very able discussion of this objection in the Preface to the second edition, though, as far as

[1] *Op. cit.* p. 120.

it goes, satisfying to the reason, somehow fails to secure conviction. That the objection has less real force when one probes deeper, carrying Dr Tennant's thought further along the lines on which we have been conducting our investigations, is one of the tasks that I have set myself to try to demonstrate. Another question, raised by Mr Gayford in the *Journal of Theological Studies*, April 1903, to which in my opinion Dr Tennant does not do full justice, will also come into prominence, and I hope find some answer, in our discussion. It is quoted by Dr Tennant thus: "Granted that the propensities which constitute the *fomes peccati* come to us from our animal ancestry, and are in themselves non-moral, the last step in the evidence should tell us what attitude the will itself at its first appearance is seen to adopt towards these propensities. Is it neutral? Does it incline towards the 'higher Law' which is just beginning to dawn upon the consciousness? Or is it found from the first in sympathy and alliance with the impulses which it ought to curb? This goes really to the root of the whole matter: and to most thinkers, not only the theologians, but also the philosophers, the phenomena have seemed to point to the last of these alternatives. It is this aspect of the question, the fundamental aspect, which Mr Tennant really evades. He assumes without proof that the will from the first has been neutral as towards the lower impulses."

We have seen that the destiny of the animal as a material entity is controlled by two opposing processes, the physical and the vital; the one tending to the degradation of energy, that katabolic process that is always ultimately victorious in the individual; the other opposing this degradation, the vital impulse or anabolic process which emerges victorious in the race though not in the individual. We have seen too that the vital impulse is a progressive thing. A kind of dead anabolism may persist for a time in an organism that has reached equilibrium, but the Damoclean sword hangs suspended: a change in the environment means destruction as surely as the severing of the hair that kept the sword in equilibrium meant death to the feaster beneath.

"Au banquet de la vie, infortuné convive
J'apparus un jour, et je meurs."

Once lose touch with the progressiveness of life, and the living force that conditions all progress is gone; the race is bound in the long run to be swept away in the stream of katabolic change. Irresistible, hopeless is the doom.

"La vie est vaine:
Un peu d'amour,
Un peu de haine,
Et puis — Bon jour.

La vie est brève:
Un peu d'espoir,
Un peu de rêve,
Et puis — Bon soir."

Life is reduced to a riddle without an answer; a cycle of physical passion, birth, meaningless aspirations and gropings, death, till at length the semblance of life ceases to trouble the smooth flow of the cosmic tide.

The animal does not know this: only the conscious reflective being can perceive any difference between the back-waters and the main stream of the evolutionary flow. But the important point for us is that we men *are* conscious reflective beings, and that we can perceive a difference between the back-waters and the main stream, even if we have never heard of evolution. Every man knows that certain things, which we term bad, check and hamper, even destroy, his higher faculties, and impair his powers of work, whatever that work may be: especially does he know it if his work be creative. In the long run sensualism kills the power of doing great creative work. Every man knows that some things make for progress, others for failure. Every man knows that he is higher in the scale of animate beings than a dog. Every man, in his half-conscious homage to what is first-rate, in his admiration for the doer of work that is first-rate, gives tacit recognition to an ideal; and the nature of an ideal is to draw men towards it, itself ever receding. It is like the rainbow, at whose foot lies buried the golden key of happiness and knowledge, which no child even has reached except in dreams, which yet begets a sense of need and longing that draws the adventurer

on, till he at least learns and suffers all that becomes a man: and at the last perhaps his quest is crowned with a vision, which satisfies his soul, as Galahad's quest was crowned and his soul satisfied with the vision of the Sanc Greal. It is through ideals that men progress—even though the ideal may only be a better-chipped arrow-head.

The ideal is the manifestation, or rather the conscious recognition, of the vital impulse which has conditioned all the progress of the unconscious beings, and still conditions the progress of conscious man. Only by obeying the impulse can man rise higher. He is not freed from the strife: he is still on the upward road, he is still subject to the laws of matter and so destined to physical death. If he sets himself against the impulse—and he can do this, for in the inturning of the consciousness on itself a larger measure of indetermination has been introduced into his being than was ever found before, since inturning of the consciousness means self-consciousness, and self-consciousness means consciousness of volition, of power, and of choice—if he sets himself against the impulse, he is voluntarily opposing the only thing in nature that is capable of progress, he is enlisting his will on the side of the downward forces that rule matter; it is not too much to say he has set his signature to a treaty with death. And this, I believe, is the fundamental essence of sin. Let us see to what it leads us.

Civilised man, at any rate, is in a large degree exempted from the internecine warfare of the lower animals. From the material side there are many indications that he has reached the highest development that is possible for an animal in the present condition of the earth. We saw, in Chapter I, that the organism that became man might be said to have drifted on to a new threshold where new conditions, not of sun and air, but of supersensual influences act on it. Henceforward progress must lie in the direction of the mind, the will, the soul, if we may be allowed to use the familiar term for that part of man's consciousness which concerns itself with ideals. But progress in this region is just as urgently necessary, even to the physical being of man, as it was in the lower stages of creation. Nations that have ceased to progress and nations that have over-specialised alike must fall. History shows us only too clearly that to be in a state of grace once does *not* ensure salvation. A nation that has been in the main stream can cease to be in it. The anthropophagous Islander, the nomad Indian, the aesthetic Greek, the sensual Roman, must give place to more adaptable, less specialised races just as much as the stationary tribe which still chips flint. So too with the individual: the man in whom there is a divine spark, even if it be only of personal ambition, succeeds over the head of the inert man. No man is exempt from the strife of minds

and wills, even though the grosser strife of physical adaptation is largely absent. The lower, equilibrated, effortless race may exist on sufferance; the lower, equilibrated, effortless individual may exist on charity, or on that same larger charity, sufferance; but neither the race nor the individual will do anything in the world, unless by some means the vital impulse is once more set free in their life. What are all our social improvements, our rescue work, all our efforts to teach trades and husbandry to nomad pariah tribes, but attempts to instil this impulse, or rather, to give it free play, by what name so ever we may choose to call the particular scheme in which we are interested? We say we must give a man self-respect, we must make his life worth living; or, we must try to raise this or that tribe from its low level of savagery by showing the advantages of a higher kind of life. And when we have reached this stage in our thought, we are surely on the border line of the spiritual. The centre of conflict has moved from the plane of physical evolution to that of the mind and the will, but there is still the same need of a progressive impulse if ultimate destruction is to be avoided. The difference lies in this, that there is a more or less conscious realisation of an ideal, a half-understood understanding that life has a purpose, is not a mere shadow-play enacted for the amusement of the gods, with Chance as Choragos, as Lucian wrote. And with this realisation comes a sense of the urgency of

co-operation, a recognition that man can and must turn his will towards the same goal: that he can and must voluntarily make progress more rapid.

In other words, the tribe or race begins to entertain a belief in a God, who made the world for some *end,* even if that end was merely his own whim; and so it becomes incumbent on men to serve him, or at least to propitiate him; and this can only be accomplished by doing what he wants. I was informed by a great traveller who has done much scientific work in the islands of the Pacific and of the Indian Ocean, that he had never come across a tribe which did not entertain a belief in some Big God or Great Spirit who made the whole world, even though they rarely worshipped Him, because He seemed so far away, and especially because He was the God of other tribes as well, while their own gods were very near and wanted constant attention, and moreover were more likely to help them in war. This of course confuses the issue, but in our reconstruction of the *main* line of advance I think we shall not be very far wrong if, neglecting the by-paths, we assume that the tribal God was identified with the Great Spirit who created the world, as was undoubtedly the case with the Hebrew people.

Thus with the higher development comes a clearer view of the whole trend of human life, or at least of the life of that particular nation or tribe: the God made the world in general, and chose that tribe in

particular. If the members of that tribe pleased him they would have a very happy life somewhere; if they did not, he would destroy them. That is to say, an ideal of pleasing the tribal God became the chief mode of expression of the vital impulse. And at this stage progress ceased for many nations. But it is a noteworthy thing that among the Jews there was no clear hope—at first no hope at all—of personal reward or punishment in a future life; while yet there grew up a belief that their God was the God of the whole world, and an intensely real trust that the behaviour of the nation, and of each individual composing it, was of vital importance to the plan of God for the future. In other words, without any hope of personal salvation, the Jew recognised that God had a great plan for the Jewish nation, and not for it alone but for the whole world, in the execution of which he needed the co-operation of each individual. Failure to work with God in this matter was called sin. I think I am justified in saying that even the sin of the individual was looked upon as a disgrace to the nation, and that hence arose the stringent code that differentiated the Jewish nation so markedly from the nations around. Very soon came a dim belief in a future life with God for the Jews and for all the nations of the earth—a belief growing ever brighter.

Here then the conscious participation of the in-

dividual in a world-plan has emerged: a belief that the world is tending God-ward, and that man can and must help it forward. Clearly the Jewish race was in the main stream of progress.

But it is only recently that men have come to the least understanding of the unity that underlies the whole world-development. For many ages the conception of that completeness was marred by a belief in discontinuities. The special days of creation—the creation of perfect man—the dual lordship of God and Satan—the ruin of man by the fall—the slow and partial recovery—all these introduced discords that made the world very hard to understand. And so there arose harsh controversies over irreconcilable systems of explanation. Belief and doubt were firmly wedded in the minds of thoughtful men, and their offspring was a crop of those strange anomalies we call theodicies.

Even now, many fail to grasp the completeness of the unity. This I believe lies at the root of Mr Gayford's objection to Dr Tennant's theory, mentioned above. He still wants to find a discontinuity between the propensities of the self-conscious animal, the *fomes peccati*, and its will; whereas to my thinking there can be no doubt that the will is simply the result of the in-turning on itself of the consciousness or vital impulse, that has underlain all progress throughout,

engendering self-consciousness—that it is, so to speak, continuous with the propensities—and so the animal, now able to realise itself as a fashioner of tools, bends its powers voluntarily to the work; and, learning by experience that progress is the condition of life, constantly brings its will to bear on new things for the improvement of its lot. *In other words, now that we are dealing with a self-conscious being, it is* EXPERIENCE *which teaches that to bend the will towards progress is right, while to bend it towards retrogression, or to leave it dormant, is wrong because it entails destruction.* Not till long after does the dimmest idea arise in the mind that all men are developing towards a definite end; one cannot for a moment imagine that the earliest sins were committed in conscious opposition to a higher will: only, there was a realisation of the need to go forwards, and anything that hindered that became sin.

So far we have considered the race rather than the individual, though in the last paragraph we have indicated what we believe to be the key to the mystery of individual sin.

The race must fail if the vital impulse is disregarded: equilibrium, passivity, unprogressiveness, mean death. This for the unconscious animate world. For man the development is on a higher plane, in the domain of thought and will and spirit. But here too, in the first two at any rate, absence of progress,

equilibrium, means physical death to the race. Only, since the progress is in the domain of the mind and will, it is conscious. There must be the conscious dedication of the nation to progress through its component individuals, if it is not to fail. Last of all comes the realisation that the whole world is animated by that same spirit of unrest, which urges it upward towards one goal—the likening of the spirit to one Spirit who is above all and through all and in all, in perfect freedom and perfect service; not a struggle between evil matter and good spirit, but the effort of spirit to create itself in winning free from the determinate katabolism from which it emerges, growing always in indetermination as it approaches nearer and nearer to the perfect freedom of the God-spirit. And the conscious checking of this creative growth by actions which experience has shown to be antagonistic to it, is, in my belief, the real essence of sin.

Thus sin, though negative in origin, though failure in one sense, is yet most truly positive in that it is the voluntary checking of the great process for the sake of which everything exists, by individual beings who have at any rate some glimpse of the nature of that process.

For self-consciousness is essentially an individual thing. It is not so much that the race becomes conscious of itself as a race, as that each individual

comes to be conscious of himself as a person and as an originating cause of phenomena. He recognises in himself the existence of a force which urges him to do certain things and to abstain from doing other things, finding by experience that by following these inward promptings he gains greater self-realisation, becomes more master of his fate, while their rejection leads to deterioration. For it is quite certain that one of the first properties of self-consciousness is the ability to recognise the trend of development, if not always a man's own, at any rate that of his neighbour. Every man recognises the existence of an upward and a downward movement in others; every man really gives tacit acceptance to the fact that his own life is tending definitely some whither, towards some goal, as he makes a decision to do or not to do this or that. In Dr Tennant's phrase, as he makes a decision he tacitly accepts the existence of the "raw material of morality" in himself, and moralises or fails to moralise it. And if we push the idea of morality back we can see in it a prompting of great significance to the race. Those very writers who claim that ethics is simply a communal necessity, arising automatically out of the conditions of mutual dependence in a colony, are really arguing the same thing. Ethics forms the necessary basis of further progress. It does certainly arise by the interplay of interests in a community; the community being a semi-permanent entity, always

perfecting the machinery of its common life: an entity whose component parts work and pass. As the flame of a candle remains while the particles which give it being change each moment, so it is with the community; and so too is it with each individual: his body remains while the molecules which are its physical basis change. But we must not forget that the simile is equally true of the vital impulse which underlies it all—and falls equally short of the truth.

The flame is a flame and remains unchanged. But the community of to-morrow is not the community of to-day: it is something more. The man of to-morrow is not the man of to-day: he is something more. The community has won victories over matter—it has gained in indetermination, and this just because the man has gained in indetermination. And these are but more instances of the great truth that the vital impulse, in whatsoever material body it may be clothed, is always achieving greater freedom. When we say that ethics necessarily arises with community life, we are accepting the fact that the community must improve; and by defining "improvement" in ethical terms we are conceding that the evolution which led up to man is still working on man in a sphere other than the corporeal. Moral instead of physical adaptation becomes the condition of progress[1].

[1] That there is some measure of independence between the moral and spiritual development is quite true: Wallace draws attention to

The possibility of ethical development rests on the self-consciousness of the individual: therefore the future of the race depends wholly on the individual.

It is this that, from the evolutionary standpoint, makes what we call sin evil. Man uses the freedom which he has gained to check the growth of freedom of the spirit and so to hinder the eternal Process that is to bring into being a spirit that is perfectly free. The greatness of his sin is measured by his realisation of the end of life and the part his will plays in this rejection.

We have traced our idea of the nature of sin and have seen its effect on the race. So long as the vital impulse is in any degree determined or hampered from without, so long, that is, as katabolism is in any degree victorious, so long, it seems, is the race unfinished, so long is there still development to come. Aided by the will of man progress is far more rapid. Compared with the length of time since life began on the globe, man has existed but a few moments; and yet the progress of civilisation and invention and thought shows a vast advance in his indetermination. The spirit is still fettered by matter, but it is steadily emerging into a fuller heritage.

this, and gives striking instances, in his book on the Malay Archipelago. But all it goes to show is that the two indicate different stages of evolution, just as the physical and moral stages of progress do—stages which yet interpenetrate, and which must both bear their part in the genesis of the perfect man.

Undoubtedly the most salient feature of this emergence is the creation of fuller personality. And in personality rests the great argument for belief in the relation of man to God, and in immortality. From the purely natural standpoint I do not see that we can advance farther than a realisation that the progress of the race depends largely, if not wholly, on the will of the individuals composing it, once self-consciousness has emerged, and that sin is the conscious setting of the will of the individual to oppose this progress. When personality appears, any further interpretation of the Universe must be sought in the realm of personality.

In Chapter I we found reason to look on each stage of development as, in a sense, an end in itself, while yet the existence of the unrest, the vital impulse, indicated a kind of teleology, in that something was struggling to emerge into what we must call, for want of a better term, self-expression. As soon as personality appears we at once find a meaning for this. Each person *is* an end in himself: he is conscious of it; and it is this consciousness that makes him seek to know what this "end" may be. And, as we have seen, he gradually comes to look on himself as a worker, labouring at a task that God has set to all men. If he does his work ill he will be annihilated, or become enwrapt in the vague nothingness of Sheol—if we may take the Jewish mode of expression as representing a definite stage on the direct road of progress. If he does well God will be pleased with him. He may not

be happy or fortunate in this life, and he has no hope of another, but somehow God's approval ranks higher than personal gain. It is only later that the future becomes more clear to him, and he realises that personality is an end in itself, and can never be absorbed again into the formless stream of things. When he comes to understand this he is assured of immortality. He, his own self, will be rewarded for his faithful work by a life nearer to God, with a fuller understanding of what life means: seeing clearly what was the work he helped in; perhaps working with clearer light for other ends, at any rate happy in union with God. True, in some races this appreciation of the eternal nature of personality was lost, as we have seen, owing to an erroneous philosophy which looked on the world forces as in themselves evil. But if, as is almost universally conceded by those unbiassed by any religious tenets, Christianity represents the highest stage of religion that has yet appeared in the world, this is of little moment to our argument: we have merely another instance of a back-water in the stream of progress.

Let us now summarise the thought of this chapter.

Objections have been raised against Dr Tennant's view of the origin of sin on the ground that to define sin in terms of failure is to make it negative, and so to minimise it; and also that, even granting that the *fomes peccati* come to us from our animal ancestry and so are non-moral, yet the writer evades the

fundamental aspect of the question when he assumes that the will is neutral. Before considering these objections we argued that life in which the vital impulse is dormant is meaningless and transient. And man, since he is a conscious being, is able to know this, and does in fact know it: his very yearning after an ideal is evidence that he knows that the stream of life is moving towards a goal. If he consciously spurns his ideal, he sins, throwing the weight of his personality on the side of katabolism, which means death. For the struggle is not yet over: it is now on a higher plane; but the mind and will and spirit, as they develop, are still dependent on matter, and subject to the old struggle with the cosmic forces of decay. We still have to do all we can to aid the anabolic effort when it seems in danger of extinction.

The recognition of the existence of a goal towards which the race was tending emerged, at any rate with the Jews, who seem to have been on the direct line of progress, before the belief that personality was indestructible, and sin meant to the Jew the failure of a man to do his part in the furtherance of the race by personal holiness. Thus consciousness of participation in a world-plan led to a clearly-reasoned idea of the nature of sin. Now, however, thanks to a clear idea of the uniformity and continuity of the evolutionary process, we can see the completeness and unity of this world-plan, and with this conception of unity and continuity the difficulty about the bias of

the will disappears: the emergence of will is due to an in-turning of the consciousness on itself, whose immediate purpose is the securing of greater control over matter: it is only by experience that the conscious being learns that some applications of the will are right and others wrong, according as they tend towards improvement or the opposite; and sin is primarily the misuse of this experience. Thus although sin is negative in the sense that it is a "failure to moralise the raw material of morality," yet it is positive in that this failure is due to the conscious misuse of experience.

Turning then to the individual we indicated briefly why we must assume that ethics, though a product of community life, is yet dependent wholly on the individuals of the community, resting on their self-consciousness. And the salient feature of the ethical life is the development of personality. In personality the stake of the individual in the development of the race must be sought. We cannot stay to discuss the reasons for the belief that personality is immortal: for that, reference must be made to some of the many works which deal with personality from the philosophical and religious sides. For our purpose it is enough if we accept the importance that is generally attached to it, without considering the arguments upon which that importance is based.

CHAPTER V

A SUMMARY OF CHRISTIAN THOUGHT ON THE ATONEMENT

STEP by step we have endeavoured to make a survey of a road that stretches away towards the illimitable past. Stretching away into the illimitable future is another road, tentatively surveyed by countless generations of thinkers. But this road also stretches backwards into the past. If the results of the different surveys are correct, these two must surely be found to be one and the same. We must then compare the surveys and by comparison try if we can eliminate the errors and see how the two really represent one and the same road. This is our problem.

As each generation has to serve as a living link between the has-lived and the yet-to-live, to be at once an end and a new beginning, the last term of a series and the first term of another series, so the road that life traverses must be one. Theologians believe that it leads from one beginning to one goal; scientists teach that the past stages are clearly marked and traceable.

We must then examine our maps to see how we may reconcile such discrepancies as appear.

The stages along the road mapped out in our biological survey run thus.

(1) There is complete continuity between the unconscious and conscious animal: each develops his characters under the stimulus of environment, and certain of the conscious animal's characters seem to demand a spiritual environment. Thus we are led to postulate a God. (2) Progress is simply response to environment, a response aiming at equilibrium, yet urged by a "divine discontent" always to seek a completer equilibrium that embraces more conditions. Without this "divine discontent," which is the vital impulse of M. Bergson, there would not be progress. (3) The vital impulse is always striving in antagonism to the cosmic process of dissipation, and achieves a greater and greater degree of freedom. (4) The animal having become in some measure master of its fate, the vital impulse, in-turning on itself, gives origin to self-consciousness. (5) With self-consciousness comes the possibility of volition, tending towards progress or the reverse, together with the power to recognise the existence of a trend in men: to believe in some rude form of teleology, at least in a destiny for *man*. Far later comes the idea of one single purpose underlying the whole world: agreement as to that purpose still lies in the womb of Time. (6) The interaction of

volition and the rudiments of the idea of purpose in the world-plan produce the possibility of sin. Sin is the expression of a clashing between the two.

We dare not claim that our reasoning is flawless, though up to this point it has dealt, apparently, with things far less high than the great central dogma of the Christian faith, the Incarnation and Atonement. But to the Christian the whole matter is of more import than anything else in his life; and any attempt to present a theory which indicates that underneath the whole of life lies a great Plan, pre-ordained, continuous in action, certain in fulfilment, which yet leaves man a full measure of freedom—freedom always "increasing unto the perfect day"—seems worth while, in the hope that it may offer some clue to a few who are groping in the half-dark. The difficulties of one generation are not those of another; the theories of one generation will not be those of another. But any train of thought which helps one man of any age and nation, may often help others of his fellow-gropers. Much of it is for the time only, and must pass, but the grains of truth will be sifted out and added to the world's store. The winnowing of time has scattered much chaff from the thoughts of men on the Atonement, as we shall see; but each new theory contributed a few grains to the residuum of truth. It is in the hope that there may be something of use to a few at the present day, and

in the belief that there may be found a few good grains in the winnowing, that we dare to add our small harvest to the common garner.

We must next, then, to return to our metaphor, examine the maps of the theologians, which are many and various. We shall do no more than indicate the directions from which the problem of the relation between the Perfect God and sinful man has been attacked, and the main conclusions arrived at, in the briefest manner possible, in order that, examining the residuum of truth, we may appreciate what has stood, or seems likely to stand, the test of time, and so construct from this a map that represents the results of the theological survey.

An admirable account of the general development of thought on the Incarnation and Atonement is to be found in Oxenham's *Catholic Doctrine of the Atonement*[1]: the brief summary that follows is derived from that.

A threefold division of the causes or motives of the Incarnation is usually made by theologians: the manifestation of the Glory of God; the benefit of man by redemption and sanctification, by teaching, and by example; and the triumph over Satan (p. 97).

Of the ante-Nicene Fathers only Irenaeus and Origen propound a definite theory. Irenaeus considered that the Incarnation was necessary in order

[1] The references are to the third edition, 1881.

that perfect obedience might be substituted for disobedience; but even so a sacrifice had to be paid to Satan, and the death of the Redeemer was the only means of Redemption. How the death on the Cross brought about Redemption is not clearly explained (pp. 130 *seqq.*).

Origen made this clear: the Devil had obtained rights over man, which had to be satisfied. He deceived himself, "not perceiving that the human race was to be still more delivered by His (Christ's) death than it had been by His teaching and miracles." Satan thought to obtain Christ's soul, and so to secure dominion over man for ever. How Satan came to deceive himself is left unexplained, or rather, it is suggested that he was deceived by God.

Though Origen did not teach the doctrine of vicarious sacrifice, at any rate in its full sense, he yet considered that a sacrifice was necessary as the means of man's reformation, to bring him once more within the embrace of the love of God (pp. 136 *seqq.*).

Thus in the ante-Nicene Fathers there is no explanation of Redemption; the point brought out clearly is that Christ's sufferings were undergone ὑπὲρ not ἀντὶ man.

In the later Fathers, and especially the Greek, more stress was laid on the Incarnation than on the Atonement. There is no indication of belief that a change in the Father's Will towards man was brought

about by the Incarnation; rather, there is clear foreshadowing of the Scotist view that the Incarnation was part of the eternal purpose of God. They follow Origen in the strange view of the deception of Satan by God. All through these early writers runs the semi-Gnostic idea of the battle between God and a Power of evil who almost represents the Demi-urge. The world ruled by Satan is decidedly an evil place.

With Erigena we reach the threshold of the later developments of thought. He taught that man fell *in himself, before* the Devil's temptation, and before he attained a full realisation of the Peace of God. "Datur intelligi quod homo prius in se ipso lapsus est quam a diabolo tentaretur, non enim credibile est eundem hominem et in contemplatione aeternae pacis stetisse, et, suadente femina, serpentis veneno corrupta, corruisse" (*de Divisione Naturarum*, cap. IV, quoted by Oxenham). This fall resulted in the division of sexes, and gave opportunity to Satan to obtain control over man. In the Incarnation God united all outward phenomena to their ἰδέαι, or archetypes, which existed in Himself, and so made Himself apprehensible to men and angels alike. This Incarnation must have taken place in any case, since it was part of the Eternal Plan of God to bring men into relation with Himself. But man had sinned in the body, and by the death of the body the possibility of sin is done away. Thus death necessarily followed upon sin. Yet the soul was still

separated from God by sin. The graciousness of God was however willing to accept the death of Christ as a means of reconciliation (pp. 170 *seqq.*).

Anselm's writings mark the beginning of a new age; the age of the Schoolmen. He repudiates the idea of a debt paid to Satan, on the ground that it contradicts either the omnipotence or the goodness of God. His work is governed rather by the forensic idea of a debt incurred by sin and the need of payment of a legal equivalent to divine justice. The honour of God has been impugned and robbed; the debt is so great that none but God can pay it, for man already owes all that he is to God. Free forgiveness is impossible, for the order of God's Kingdom is marred. Christ died *voluntarily*, not of debt, and so dying was justly able to claim as recompense from the Father the salvation of man. Justice and Mercy alike are satisfied, for the payment far exceeds the debt, and the Father freely accepts Christ's death, offered by man instead of his own (pp. 180 *seqq.*).

The rejection of the Devil's claim, which is so characteristic of Anselm's theory, is generally accepted by the rest of the schoolmen, but his contention that the death of Christ constituted the only possible means of redemption is rejected, though, as we shall see, it came into prominence again during the period of the Reformation.

Henceforward until the Reformation, and really

afterwards down to the present day, there are two main branches, headed respectively by Aquinas and Duns Scotus.

Briefly, the two schools resemble each other in rejecting the *necessity* of the Passion: God "was not in the position of a civil ruler who cannot lawfully remit the penalty of offences committed...against the commonweal": but the Passion was the most suitable method of bringing home to man the greatness of his sin. It is not on the measure of the sacrifice, but on the measure of God's acceptance, that reconciliation depends. Christ's death brings merit to us, satisfaction to God; it is the highest type of the highest form of worship, sacrifice, and it redeems us from the bondage and punishment of sin. But according to the Thomists the Incarnation was solely conditioned and made necessary by man's fall; according to the Scotists it was part of the originally predestined scheme before the fall. The latter believed that if man had not fallen Christ would still have come as man, to be our model and the head of the mystical body symbolised in the human race (pp. 204 *seqq.*). This last view is certainly foreshadowed in the writings of the Fathers and in Erigena.

We now reach the period of the Reformation, and here a brief reference to the doctrine of Original Sin becomes necessary.

The Catholic doctrine of Original Sin was this:

Man was created with perfect nature, in which lay the power of freedom; and super-added *originalis justitia* united him in communion with his Maker. By the fall this last supernatural grace was lost, and his nature was hence marred, since, uncontrolled by grace, freedom was sure to lead to sin in the individual. This grace it is that is restored by justification and sanctification[1], and he is able by good works—for his freedom was not destroyed by sin—to recover his own fallen nature. "Original sin" is thus the loss of supernatural grace, not an inherited taint in man's nature.

Luther denied the *originalis justitia*, holding that man's original perfection was part of his nature, implanted by God, the capabilities and the acts of virtue being alike implanted. Hence there was no real freedom. By the fall, then, man lost all touch with God, all power of doing anything good at all; and more, he not only became sinful, he became sin; essentially identified with evil and so abhorrent to God (pp. 224 *seqq.*). Hence everything he does is mortal sin, and all his apparent virtues are vices (Melanchthon).

Original sin has thus a far more all-embracing nature in the system of the Reformers than in that

[1] Of course, the death of Christ atoned for actual sin as well as original sin. See the discussion in the preface to the 2nd edition of Oxenham's book.

of their opponents. With Luther and his followers justification becomes in consequence *acquittal from penalties.* Christ's sufferings were accepted *instead* of ours, as a propitiation to an angry God. Christ suffered vicarious punishment, and in His Passion actually endured the pains of Hell. Man's acceptance of Christ is thus based on terror[1], and not on love: his desire is to escape Hell at any price and he can only do so by accepting Christ.

Calvin in some directions pushed this doctrine further. He believed in absolute predestination, and hence implied that God is the author of sin—a horrible tenet, defended by Beza and Zwingli on the ground that God is above law. It follows that Christ only died for the sake of a few elect, and the elect are subjectively conscious of salvation. Finally, Grotius actually states his belief in the literal imputation of our sins to Christ, and of His holiness to us: with him the doctrine of vicarious obedience reaches its highest development.

The general tendency of the Reformers was therefore to insist on the Anselmian view of Christ's death as the only possible means of reconciliation, and to this they added the doctrine of substitution of Christ's perfectness and obedience for man's perfectness and obedience lost in

[1] This was taught by Edwards as the official Calvinistic doctrine as late as the last quarter of the 18th century, whose views, says McLeod Campbell, are still held among many Scottish Presbyterians. See McLeod Campbell, *Nature of Atonement*, ch. v.

the Fall. Many of them dwelt on the idea of the wrathful God who hated sinfulness and required propitiation, and so in a measure the idea of the Divine Fatherhood was relegated to the background. God became for them, as Matthew Arnold expresses it, "a magnified and non-natural man in the next street" "whose proceedings Calvinism intimately knew and could give account of[1]." There were many reactions against one point and another, but on the whole the official views were on the lines we have briefly sketched[2].

During the next century and a half there was comparatively little original thought or controversy on the subject of the Atonement. Different points are thrown into prominence by different writers, but on the whole there is still the same division into two parties, one claiming that the death of Christ was the only possible means of reconciliation, the other that it was not the only possible one, but the one which seems most suitable and congruous, and which God chose to accept. These last again fall into the two divisions of Thomists and Scotists according as they believe that the Incarnation was solely conditioned by the Fall, or was part of the original plan of God, the Atonement being only incidental on the Fall.

Turning now to modern days we must indicate very

[1] *St Paul and Protestantism*, pp. 13, 6.

[2] See Oxenham, *op. cit.* ch. v.

briefly the direction in which thought seems to be tending. As we shall see, the main characteristic on the theological side is the attempt to escape from the Substitution Theory which characterised the thought of the Reformers[1].

Wilberforce[2], while insisting strongly on the mediatorial aspect of Christ's work, and in many ways imbued with the thought of the Reformers, is yet not prepared to pronounce on the *necessity* of Christ's death as the only possible means of atonement, but he insists strongly on its congruity. God is a loving Father, but sin is utterly abhorrent to His perfection: therefore reconciliation is needed. What atonement could be so fitting as that made by Christ, Who, Incarnate as Head of the race, is able to speak and act in the name of the whole race, and can suffer the full expiation of sin and render perfect obedience in the name of the race? Wilberforce insists strongly on the *personal* nature of Christ as Man and God, and on the need of personal communion with Christ as the link between manhood and Godhead. This need for the conscious *voluntary* acceptance of Christ as representing the ideal of

[1] The important notes on Sin and Justification, and on Vicarious Suffering, in Sanday and Headlam's *Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*, pp. 143 *seqq.*, and pp. 91 *seqq.*, should be mentioned here, though a consideration of them is not necessary for the argument of the present chapter.

[2] *The Doctrine of the Incarnation of Our Lord Jesus Christ in its relation to Mankind and to the Church*, by R. I. Wilberforce, Archdeacon of the East Riding, 1848.

humanity, this need for a real and sincere entering into Him, by entering into His death to sin, on the part of every individual man, in order that the gulf created by sin may no longer separate man from God, has come very much to the fore in modern days[1].

From this time onwards writers on the Atonement generally develop their thought along one of two lines, basing their argument either on the fact of Personality, as foreshadowed by Wilberforce, or on Ethics, as foreshadowed by many of the earlier writers. No doubt this is indirectly due to the influence of the renaissance of Philosophy, and especially to that of the eighteenth century.

Dale, for example, is at pains to show that "the Death of Christ did not merely manifest the infinite mercy of God, but really effected Reconciliation between God and man." The eternal nature and obligation of the Law of Righteousness is argued with great force, and the relation of this law to God. The writer sums up his view by stating that "God's relation to the law is not a relation of subjection but of identity." "In God the law is *alive*; it reigns on His throne, sways His sceptre, is crowned with His glory." He considers the ethical nature of punishment, and concludes that "whatever moral element there is in punishment itself —as punishment—is derived from the person or power

[1] Cf. Du Bose, *The Gospel in the Gospels*, ch. XIII; also Matthew Arnold, *St Paul and Protestantism*, *saepe*.

that inflicts": it is the moral imperative of the Law of Righteousness that brings punishment on the sinner: by punishment Righteousness is vindicated. There may be subsidiary objects in punishment as punishment, but this is chief. And the grandeur of the law is manifested in the terribleness of the suffering entailed by sin—the sufferings of Christ.

Ethical precepts, he says, do not seem to be "self-acting" in the same way that natural laws are: it is possible to transgress them without immediate penalty: in human affairs they require the co-operation of human will; and so also the transcendent law of righteousness may require the concurrence of the Divine Will, and may be superseded by it, if there is adequate reason.

This reason may be shown in the triumph of Righteousness by the voluntary death of Christ to sin. Christ's relation to the universe is unique; for the universe exists in Him and for Him and through Him. Therefore it is congruous, and to our limited minds seems necessary, that Christ should suffer for our Redemption. For suffering is necessary: not even God can release us from the obligation to reverence and obey Him: not even He can remit the punishment of the breach of this obligation. By submitting to the awful isolation that wrung from Him the cry "Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani," Christ entered into our real relation to God as sinners while yet remaining sinless.

In His unique relation to the universe He is able to identify Himself with our race and to endure suffering for us instead of inflicting it on us.

It is important to notice that we have here some indication of the line which more recent thought has followed. Ethics are viewed more in the light of their relation to personality than from the abstract or legal point of view, although this last is still prominent.

McLeod Campbell's treatise (which is somewhat earlier in date than Dale's) does not call for special remark here. Valuable and suggestive though it is, its chief interest lies in the fact that it bridges over in a great measure the gap between the official "Catholic" and "Protestant" interpretations of the central truth of Christianity. In one way the author completes the central idea of Wilberforce's book, the representative nature of the Atonement in the suffering of the Head of the Race, by emphasising the confessional aspect of Christ's death—the confession of sin by the Race.

We must also pass over in silence two books of essays that are of great interest, *Lux Mundi* and *The Atonement in Modern Religious Thought.* After centuries of controversy which necessarily led to a loss of the sense of proportion, at the present day a far broader and more hospitable mode of thought prevails. Thanks largely to the widening influence of the ideas introduced by the scientific discoveries of the last half of the nineteenth century and the general application

of the "Scientific Method," a far greater appreciation of the many-sidedness of Truth has grown up. And these two volumes of essays reflect the spirit of the age. One is written from the Anglo-Catholic standpoint; the contributors to the other represent all shades of Christian belief. But in both the universality of the Incarnation is the dominant note. There is little that is new, but the influence of the best and broadest thought of all schools of the past is recognisable, shorn of most of the crudities that disfigured the age of controversy. And the same may be said of the Introductory Essay in Ottley's *Doctrine of the Incarnation*. The Scotist view of the Atonement as part of the Incarnation, and not as the only cause of it, seems to hold the field with the majority of modern writers.

There remain three works which call for more than passing reference, because they illustrate very clearly the tendency mentioned a short while since to consider the Atonement from one or other of two points of view, the Ethical and the Personal.

Dr Bethune-Baker's Essay in the volume of *Cambridge Theological Essays* shows very clearly that Christianity, as a practical religion, is based on a theory of life, and such theories are of necessity primarily ethical. The whole purpose of Christ's life was ethical, "to reveal to men the ideal life and so to stir in them the will to live that life, and give them

power to carry out that will." Jesus revealed God to man, and revealed man to himself. In doing this He revealed the existence of an absolute ethical standard; sin is failure to achieve this standard. The ideal set up "makes an imperious demand on conscience, and it supplies an adequate motive" in "spiritual union with Him energised by love." The doctrine of forgiveness removes the crushing burden imposed by such a standard: union with love and self-sacrifice is shown to embody the highest ethic. The unity of the whole world, seen and unseen, is the true expression of the highest principle of life, and that union is made perfect by and in love.

In a tentative note (p. 558) Dr Bethune-Baker expresses the difficulty he feels in accepting an evolutionary account of sin, as being inconsistent with the idea of an absolute ethic. He is unable to reconcile it with the doctrine of the Atonement. But it may be urged that the origin of the difficulty really lies in his statement of the case. Starting with Tennant's view of sin as "an anachronism," he regards this as making it less sinful: the continuity of development seems for him to obscure the issue. But surely, because a thing is not wrong at one stage it does not follow that it is any the less sinful at another stage. Because the child or the savage is "following the law of his physical growth and development" it does not follow that he is "doing right" when he follows the

lower impulses, other impulses being present, as Dr Bethune-Baker seems to suggest. The criterion is whether or no the higher impulses are in any degree present; as soon as they appear at all, failure to obey them is positive sin. In other words, sin is, in a large measure, subjective, depending upon the ideals of the individual.

Although, then, the doctrine of the Atonement is only touched upon incidentally in the essay, it shows clearly one trend of modern thought—the exaltation of an absolute ethical standard, which is yet only achievable under the unifying influence of love; and the need of fitting in our doctrine of the Atonement with this—as had already been attempted by Dale.

Turning to the other side we find a striking development of thought on the basis of Personality, due no doubt in a great degree to the growth of the science of Psychology, and also in part to the individualistic tendency of the age that was ushered in by the French Revolution.

Leaving on one side the somewhat extravagant views of such writers as Hudson[1], who would exalt personality at the expense of all else, and who are not professed theologians, we come to Moberly's *Atonement and Personality.* His whole theory of the Incarnation may be summed up in his own phrase as "things which were wrought without that they might be

[1] Cf. *The Law of Psychic Phenomena*, later chapters.

realised within" (p. 281). Starting with a direct denial of Dale's view of punishment as retributive, he develops the view that the object of punishment is reformation, that reformation can only be the fruit of penitence, and that forgiveness, far from being simply the remission of punishment, is the necessary result of penitence, since offender and offended are absolutely at one again if penitence is complete, being united in love and holiness. Like Dale, none the less, he identifies the Law of Righteousness and Truth with God (p. 280).

Turning then to the death of Christ, he regards it as the Act of Perfect Penitence. He claims that sin renders union with the perfect righteousness impossible, and so perfect penitence is only possible to the sinless —a penitence that takes the form of "the voluntary sin-bearing of the sinless, the self-identity with righteousness in condemnation of sin of One whose self-identity, though sinless, would take the form of surrender of the self in the very attitude of the ideal penitent" (p. 118).

The next point is, as far as I know, a new one. The Pentecostal gift of the Holy Spirit is an integral part of the Atonement. "The real presence of the Incarnate as Spirit constituting the inmost personality of man, is the reality in man of that consummated victory of the penitence, or righteousness, of the Atonement, which was the culmination and end of Incarnation"

(p. 283). It is "the perpetual extension, or Spiritual realisation of the Incarnation." In connection with this view of the function of the Holy Spirit towards man he discusses the nature of the Holy Trinity from the side of personality, and concludes that there is absolute identity between the presence of Christ and the presence of the Spirit of Christ: the Persons of the Trinity are distinct, but the Trinity is One God. The Spirit is the subjective realisation, in ourselves and *as* our true selves, of Jesus the Christ who was objectively manifested in human flesh.

All the threads are then gathered up by the writer as he reviews the nature of human personality. Taking the three prerogatives of personal being, free-will, reason, and love, he shows that all these are incomplete in man: his freedom is very limited and partial, his reason is by no means a sure guide, his love is fitful and uncertain. On philosophical and theological grounds, as well as on the ground of common experience, man is shown to reach his full measure of self-expression and self-realisation only in the way of relation, as part of a Whole. And perfect union, the full realisation of self, can only be attained through love, by absolute union with the Spirit of Human perfection. Human personality never *was* perfect; each person was separated, shut off from relation with other personalities; shut off more than ever by sin. The only thing that could perfect it was the abolition

of all discontinuities, all partitions, all that was "in part," in the completeness of the Spirit of the Incarnate Christ. The Atonement was an at-one-ment in a fuller sense than has been generally realised.

The chief criticism that might be levelled at this remarkable and original book is that the ethical side rather sinks into unduly small proportions; while, as Hitchcock points out (*vide infra*), the writer's implication of the substitution of Christ's Personality for ours, is as unphilosophical as the substitution of Christ's merit for ours[1]. But unquestionably the constructive discussion of the completion of personality by union with Christ is a most valuable contribution to thought about the Atonement.

In Lofthouse's *Ethics and Atonement* the ethical side of the question is regarded from the standpoint of personality, thus uniting the two main lines of thought, and combining them into a coherent and systematic scheme. And all through the writer shows how the Bible is founded on a realisation of both these standpoints, in contradistinction to all other sacred books. Beginning with a general consideration of ethics in and outside the Bible, he shows that ethics and religion are inseparable in any practical system. On the one hand, the Utilitarian is faced with a demand for explanation of his dogmatic assertion that a man must do good for the sake of future generations.

[1] Hitchcock, *Atonement and Modern Thought*, p. 109.

On the other hand, the Intuitionist supplies no universal norm of righteousness, since men's ideas on the subject differ. The only escape from the *impasse* lies in self-realisation in the broadest sense. Man and man are interdependent; and the race can only find its true development in the mutual interaction of individuals. "The true basis of ethics, therefore, is neither self-interest nor duty; it is what the Greeks would call *κοινωνία*—that instinct for fellowship which separates man from the beasts that perish, and without which man speedily degenerates into a lower organism[1]." (It is interesting to note in this connection the importance of Moberly's contention that personality is *becoming*, not complete: the interaction of personalities develops them.) Man cannot attain his own fullest self-expression without acting in the ethical way, which in its turn brings advancement to the race. Neighbour and neighbour are united by ties which cannot be neglected. All virtues have their origin among persons. Sin is the breaking of this personal bond; and sin is only reparable through suffering. Renewal through suffering lies at the heart of the Biblical narratives. And so too universally: "it is one of the paradoxes of human nature that when a man once realises the wrong he has done he will welcome and even long for the chance of making some reparation that shall place him where he was before he

[1] p. 62.

had yielded to temptation[1]." There is an absolute ethical need for paying a debt: hence comes the idea of punishment. Punishment is not the offering of an equivalent—that is impossible—but it sets the injurer and the injured in the right personal relation again. Till there is contrition, whose natural mode of expression is sacrifice or suffering, there can be no renewal of the personal intercourse, and the only way in which contrition can be induced in the unrepentant is by showing how the injured person takes the attitude that prompted the injury and how he suffers. Till there is contrition there can be no forgiveness: forgiveness would else be indulgence; and till there is forgiveness there can be no renewal of personal intercourse. Where there is no repentance there must be a mediator, a reconciler. "It is the injured who must go to seek the injurer, who must place himself at the prodigal's side, bearing with him the consequences which the prodigal can feel and also those deeper sorrows which as yet he cannot feel" (p. 108). Only so can shame and repentance be aroused.

How then, since sin is an offence against the Personal God, can we come into right relations with Him again? If I follow the argument, Mr Lofthouse would answer: "A mediator is always necessary; generally that mediator is the wronged person: the first approach to perfect reconciliation must come from

[1] p. 102.

him. How then can God approach man? Only by God Himself coming as man and showing the penalty and the sorrow entailed by sin." The writer enters into an elaborate and suggestive analogy to illustrate the office of a mediator, and to show how inevitable it is that the mediator shall suffer.

Turning then to the question of vicariousness, he utterly denies all forms of the doctrine of substitution. Christ suffered on our behalf. He did not exempt us from suffering, but He took away the sting of death and pain when He made re-union with God possible to us by changing our whole attitude towards sin. The question of the righteous anger of God is next considered as indicating an absolute ethic, together with its relations to forgiveness. The universality of the sacrificial instinct in man is discussed, and the completion and fulfilment of it in the death of Christ. The older sacrifices, in their corrupt form, suggested that purity and sinlessness might be transferred to one who was impure and sinful. In the sacrifice of Christ the true meaning of mediatorial suffering is made clear—the true explanation of the destruction of all impurity by identification of mind and will with the sinless will on which sin brought suffering. In some parts of this chapter (VI) the thought is not quite clear, and there seems to be some suggestion of vicarious substitution, but the main thought is, I think, as I have represented.

Turning next to the Nature of Christ, Mr Lofthouse

shows that one man can only influence another by a union and transfusion of personalities; and that he can only effect a reconciliation between two other men by passing into each of them, and drawing them into himself. Hence the reconciler of God and man must have the nature both of God and man. Thus the study of personality would seem to favour the view that in the coming of Christ lay the only possible means of atonement, which is the re-uniting of God and man. A discussion of the nature of Personality follows, very much on the same lines as that put forward by Moberly, but with more insistence on its inclusive aspect, a clear distinction being drawn between personality and individuality.

The whole argument is summed up by Mr Lofthouse in these words: "The end of ethics and of religion alike is righteousness. Righteousness consists in the right relation between persons—that is, righteousness is fully reached when persons act to one another as if united to one another by the closest of known human ties, the ties of the family. But these ties are severed, instead of the sympathy and union of the true family, there is suspicion, hatred, injury, between person and person, between man and man, and between man and God; and consequently misery, self-reproach, helplessness and despair. How can the Reconciliation, the Atonement be made? When the injured can pass over to the injurer, expelling the latter's evil nature, and instilling

his own goodness. This can only be accomplished by mediation, and by suffering; and that is simply to say, by a person, taking the word in its highest and completest sense. It is the strength of Personality to make possible this passing over, this drawing of apparent opposites into one; and it is the glory of Personality to attain this by suffering, by laying down life to take it up again, and to bestow it on others. Personality, the impulse and the power to share the worst that another can bear, and to impart the best that one can oneself possess, is the true ladder which is let down from heaven to earth, and along which we mortals can emulate the angels by passing back and forth; it is the royal road of spiritual communication, by which what is true of one becomes true of another, and what is done to one becomes done to another; even as the supreme Person said, 'he that receiveth you receiveth me; and he that receiveth me receiveth him that sent me[1].'"

In the final chapter the universality of the Atonement is briefly considered.

Lastly, Dr Askwith in his article in the *Cambridge Theological Essays* insists, though briefly, on a point that has been left rather in the background by many writers, namely the need for the unimpaired freedom of man's will if there is to be complete union between God and man. Indeed the true freedom of the will,

[1] pp. 264, 265.

impaired by sin, must be recovered altogether, before man can once more stand in the likeness of God. It is true that the will is an essential part of the personality which is to find completion in union with God, but this side of personality nevertheless deserves more particular notice than it has received.

We have now completed our survey of the views of theologians in regard to the Atonement. Let us next, rejecting those views that merely reflect a passing phase of thought, plan out the road which theological thought lays down.

1. A great plan is being worked out in the world, by which love is to find its fulfilment in the mutual relation of Creator and created.

2. Perfect love must be free. God gave to man freedom, that the love of man might be perfect.

3. Man misused his freedom, and the sin that resulted from this misuse made a barrier between him and the Perfect God in whom sin could have no part; and many would say too that in some mysterious way the first sin affected the whole future race.

4. "God so loved the world that He gave His only Begotten Son" to bring about reconciliation through His death, and to reveal the Nature of God and the destiny and true personality of man. This revelation of the Father in the Son was destined, most men believe, to have been made even if man had remained sinless, for perfect communion could only be achieved

by union of Godhead and manhood[1]. But sin introduced a new necessity, and infused tragedy into what should have been the happy consummation of the race.

5. Sin could not be passed over, for it introduced discord. Either man must remain for ever separate from God, which could not be, for God's plan could not be brought to nought, or there must be atonement.

6. In Christ's death the gulf is bridged.

So far there is fairly general agreement. But in regard to the details of sin and atonement we have seen how widely divergent have been the opinions that obtained at different periods. Nevertheless, careful examination clearly reveals the direction in which thought is moving.

In the earlier stages sin is attributed without hesitation to the machinations of an evil Person. The origin of this view is to be found, no doubt, in the general tendency of all primitive races, which is also specially characteristic of the Oriental mind, to people the universe with a graded hierarchy of spirits of every possible kind—a tendency noticeable even in the canonical literature of the Jews. But the form which it took in Christian literature was no doubt largely

[1] Westcott's writings are largely responsible for the prevalence of the Scotist view of the Incarnation at the present time. See note p. 111.

influenced by Persian thought as modified in the dualistic systems of the Gnostic sects. As the Gnostic influence dies away the person of Satan looms less and less large, even though it enters into every theory excepting the most recent. His rightful claim over the souls of men is repudiated. The arena of discussion is elevated more and more into the ethical plane, even though at first the point of view is legal rather than metaphysical.

At the same time an attempt to approach the problem from the standpoint of personality is dimly foreshadowed in the theories of those who saw in the Incarnation not only the means of Redemption, but the fulfilment of a destined plan for revealing God to man, and uniting man to God in still closer bonds. But it did not go far enough to lead to any attempt to solve the vexed question whether any other means but the Passion of the Son could suffice to atone for sin.

On the other hand, the hard logic of legal ethics led eventually to the relegation of love to a secondary position, and ended in the terrible and blasphemous theodical systems of many of the Reformers; the sinner, not the sin, became the hated of God, and stern loveless grace seemed the highest mercy.

At last came a reaction. Those who attacked the problem from the ethical side, while emphatic in their belief in an absolute ethic, laid stress on the love of God and the personal character of the relation

between man and God. Others based their reasoning on the nature of Personality. And from the fusion, or rather the alignment, of these two arose the modern belief which finds the reconciliation of apparent discrepancies, through a more searching investigation of the nature and origin of ethics, in the view that the fundamental imperative of ethics must be derived from the nature of Personality. Without definitely committing itself, modern thought seems to me to be moving clearly towards the belief that the death of Christ was the only possible means of reconciliation between man and God, from the very nature of Personality.

In these summaries of the evolutionary and theological modes of thought about the mysteries of man's destiny and God's will, of sin and its results, it will be seen that there is very little antagonism. Most of the difficulties are removed when the Law of Righteousness is considered from the standpoint of Personality. Two important questions however require fuller consideration. On the evolutionary theory we have argued that sin is at-one-ment of the spiritual nature with the law of katabolic change. How can the death of the Saviour produce at-one-ment with the law of progress?

And secondly, what have we to say of original sin? Belief in this is extraordinarily prevalent: perhaps it would not be too much to say it is inherent in human nature. The older theological systems account for it:

in the modern ones it is relegated to a very subordinate position, and left without any satisfactory explanation. What is the meaning of this belief in original sin? These two questions must now engage our attention.

Note. Since the foregoing chapter was written an important book on *The Atonement and Modern Thought*, by F. R. Montgomery Hitchcock, has appeared, which requires notice.

In saying that this book is mainly eclectic we do not at all wish to imply that it is not of great value to the student; the author expressly says, "This is no attempt to reconstruct the doctrine of the Atonement on new lines; but it is an effort to indicate the leading principles of a theory which may be based on Scripture and yet true to philosophy," and he keeps within the limits he has set himself. In spite of the great erudition displayed, the book as a whole is not difficult, and the clearness of presentment and copious references give it a great value, apart from the sobriety of judgment and the reverence, and often beauty, of treatment, that characterise it.

The first chapter deals with the various theories of sin that have been propounded both from the theological and the philosophical points of view. The tenuity of the Scriptural warrant for the Calvinistic doctrine of Original Sin is shown, and a strong protest entered against any form of Traducianism. The weak points in the Hegelian and the Ritschlian definitions of sin are lucidly summarised. Next, the evolutionary theories of Pfleiderer and Tennant are examined. The writer's own view of Original Sin is that it is to be explained in terms of the solidarity of the race rather than by any form of traducian doctrine. But he considers that the existence and universality of sin is a sufficient basis for a Gospel of Atonement, independently of any special theory of the way in which sin originated. With this we cannot agree; if sin is merely an evolutionary product; if it merely constitutes an episode in the story of animal evolution; it is surely no longer possible to look on man as separated from God by an eternally impassable gulf, and therefore our view of the absolute necessity of the Atonement as the only means whereby man could achieve his destiny must undergo considerable modification. Indeed the writer himself admits this by implication when he criticises the

systems of those who would minimise the sinfulness of sin, either by making it only a step on the road to goodness, or by showing the sense of sin to be an inevitable, necessary stage in the development of the spirit by the action of the evolutionary forces. Later on, he himself expresses the view that sin was inevitable, but this is very different from saying that it was a necessary stage in the evolution of man—necessary that is, to man's progress. He looks on sin as entirely subjective, the Spirit convincing of sin more and more the higher the soul aspires. That this is in a large measure true is obvious, and the theory has the further advantages of explaining the intensity of the sense of sin in the greatest saints, and of holding out a rational hope of the gradual disappearance of sin as the soul becomes more developed, and so more God-like. Sin is the choosing of evil by the will, not because it is evil, but in spite of it; and Atonement becomes a "spiritual force for a new life," presented objectively in the life and death of Christ, and appropriated by us subjectively by the Grace of the Holy Spirit.

In Chapter II the Scotist view is adopted, largely on the ground that any other would involve a schism in the Divine Personality. The Atonement was not confined to the Death of Christ; his whole earthly life was a reorganisation of disorganised humanity. The Lord's Divinity did not give the power of infinite penal suffering as the Calvinists taught, nor yet infinite value to any penal suffering: the whole idea of a legal equivalent is rejected; like all modern writers Mr Hitchcock utterly refuses to entertain any form of the substitution theory as being repugnant to the moral sense of man; rather His Divinity gave infinite value to His Life and Death as being a divine triumph over death and sin, and as vindicating the moral unity and solidarity of the cosmos. Thus, as in Lofthouse's book, the system is based on a fusion of the ideas of an absolute ethic of universal validity—the Law of Righteousness of Dale—and the conception of personality; indeed these things are so closely interrelated that they form an inextricable nexus: the warp and woof of the whole cosmology. In this lies a great part of the value of the book, which fitly ends the series through which we have traced the development of thought. Like Westcott[1], the author considers that

[1] E.g. *Gospel of Life*, p. 253; *Lessons from Work*, p. 64; *Gospel of the Resurrection*, p. 174; and many other passages.

the Incarnation was involved in the Atonement: the Incarnation is the key of the Atonement and not vice-versa. He is not clear as to the necessity of the Death of the Redeemer for the work of redemption, but its fittingness is emphasised as being the victory of love, as manifesting the continuity of the seen and unseen worlds, and as marking the entire oneness of Christ with the race of which He is at once the Head and the Representative. The genesis and growth of the stress laid upon the sufferings of Christ owing to the successive influences of Judaism, Mithraism, and Docetism in their different directions are traced with considerable originality. Moberly's substitution of the Divine Personality for the human is repudiated, and the interpenetration of personalities in close communion is insisted on in its stead—a side brought into prominence also by Lofthouse. The philosophical objections to the moral perfectness of Jesus are refuted; and the chapter ends with a consideration of expiation, propitiation, remission, and redemption in the light of what has already been said. Expiation is the covering of our insufficiency with His sufficiency. Propitiation is the removal of our sins in the meeting-place of the love of God. Remission is the setting free *from* sins. Redemption is the setting free *of* our whole nature from the tyranny and bondage of sin. Here comes in the work of the Holy Spirit in the Atonement—in this point the writer follows Moberly.

The object of Chapter III is to show how the Cross is to be reconciled with the original purpose of God in the Creation. The vindication of righteousness, and of the wrath of God against sin, manifested in the atoning Death of Christ, is clearly set out, the essential principle of all being love. It is life, not death, that God wants, and the Cross gives life. But the sinfulness of sin is emphasised: the Cross conveys to man "the idea that God's love would save man from the sentence of Divine holiness on sin"; it does not minimise the sterner aspect of the Divine life. The evil in man is "removed, essentially and potentially, by the Son of man." "The Incarnation is the key of the problem. It enables us to perceive that God was in Christ removing the sin of the world; reconciling the world unto Himself; bearing the responsibility of the Creator of a race for which, considering the conditions of human growth and freedom, sin was inevitable, and feeling in the abysmal deeps of His all-inclusive and all-pervading Personality the consequences of the

sin of humanity." Sin is here clearly stated to be inevitable—a view on which most of us would rather hold judgment suspended, at any rate.

The Atonement is partly objective, partly subjective; and it is, as Moberly wrote, "a continuous process, not a completed act."

In Chapter IV the problem of Mediation is admirably dealt with, and the argument of this important chapter is summarised on pp. 180—183.

Chapter V is concerned with the central point of Mr Hitchcock's theory, the Identification of the Saviour with the Race—an idea made much of in Wilberforce's book, it will be remembered, and again emphasised by Dale and by Matthew Arnold. But the writer discusses at length how human solidarity is intensified by "the self-identification of the immanent, indwelling Christ with the race"; by the uniting of sinful men in the inclusive Personality of the Sinless One who is yet present in each one, bearing the brunt of the attacks of sin, and conquering it.

The remaining chapters need not be considered for the purposes of this survey, though they offer many suggestive points. They are occupied with a fuller discussion of Retribution, Forgiveness, and Reconciliation. The book is completed by chapters on Priesthood and Sacrifice; The Lamb of God; and Atonement and Responsibility.

CHAPTER VI

THE CONSEQUENCES OF SIN

In our investigation we have found a miracle pervading all life. Leaving the mystery of origins on one side as unsolved, perhaps insoluble by human reason, this one strange miracle emerged more and more clearly as we marshalled our facts—the miracle of increasing indetermination arising out of the determinate interplay of forces acting on material organisms; the miracle of the material organism opening fresh fields for the development of its own indetermination by determinate response to its surroundings. On the one hand we have the individual organism apparently subject to the laws of dissipation, on the other we have the race continually progressing in opposition to those laws. Yet this race-progress depends in some measure on the individual; in the lower stages perhaps, through sexual selection and the like; certainly in the higher, when conscious volition comes into play. But the biologist is not much concerned with individuals, so for

the moment we will confine our attention to the race, in order to bring out the importance of the individuals in the higher stages. We may say then that, broadly speaking, the life-process seems to tend always in one direction, towards the development of freedom through struggle with the forces of limitation. Beneath the hard crust of circumstance is a welling fountain which is bound to find egress. At first an almost imperceptible film of moisture oozes through unsuspected crannies; the film becomes a trickle, the trickle swells into a stream, until at length the crust is swept bodily away in the torrent. So the vital impulse welling up, sweeps away all barriers of determination. It *is* purposive: there *is* a teleology in life—a teleology that is to be found in the victory of freedom, in the triumphant march of living matter under the urging of the vital impulse.

Now the theologian sees in life not only purpose, but Divine purpose. He looks on man, with his freedom of will, as the outcome of Divine Love which from its very and essential nature seeks to satisfy itself by loving; which can only perfectly love the perfect and the free; which, embracing all that is perfect, seeks to embrace yet more, and so creates. To the theologian, the end and aim of life is Love, complete union with the loving I AM, the Father of Light, the "centre and soul of every sphere," with whom is no shadow that is cast by turning; the perfect, complete Being who is

yet ever increasing by that same creative need of Love. For modern theology, which looks on God as Immanent in all His evolving creation, as well as being the Transcendent I AM, seems more and more to suggest that God too is in a sense *becoming*; that the love His creation offers makes fresh demands on His Love, which so is ever comprehending—embracing—fresh love, and which ever seeks expansion in creative activity.

That is to say, as far as the animal world is concerned, the theologian sees a teleological significance in all the struggles of the age-long development that has found its culmination, as yet, in man. For him, "the whole creation groaneth and travaileth together until now, *waiting for the adoption*." And certainly the miracle of increasing indetermination in a determinate environment, which emerges as the essential feature of evolutionary progress, does not negative this view. Certainly the conclusion to which we have come, that sin is conscious opposition to the vital impulse that underlies or produces this miracle, is not antagonistic to it. The theologian, working backwards from the highest stage, sees a purpose, that is love, and that demands freedom and love for its fulfilment; the evolutionary philosopher, working forwards, mainly, from the lowest stage, finds the miraculous emergence of freedom from determinate conditions and interactions. The theologian believes in a creative Being who is

drawing other beings to Himself, making them make themselves like Him—and if they can ever be like Him, there must be community of nature: they too must be able in some degree to love and to create; the evolutionary philosopher finds an evolution which is producing beings with greater and greater creative power: beings that from the first have a rudimentary capacity of adding to their environment and that of other creatures, which capacity of origination increases higher up in the scale until it comes to be exercised consciously and voluntarily.

Surely there is no need for fundamental disagreement between our theologian and our evolutionary philosopher when the facts are stated in this form. If he will but look deep enough, the theologian has simply to take the philosopher's work and put his own interpretation on it.

Assuming, then, that there is no real antagonism between the two points of view, let us turn to the great question—the problem of Sin and of Atonement.

We have seen that it is at any rate possible and reasonable to regard sin as voluntary antagonism to the miracle of the vital impulse. A man does not sin with this full understanding of what he is doing; but, in so far as there is the slightest idea of "better" or "worse" as applied to action, there *is* recognition of the existence of two tendencies in life, and to choose the wrong path must lead to the suspension or extinction

of the vital impulse as surely as it did in the lower stages of creation, for it is the voluntary rejection of the condition of progress[1]. Philosopher and theologian are still on common ground.

But in the lower stages which we have considered so far, for the *race* there is no second chance. We have taken as an axiom of our discussion the idea that compromise with katabolism, acceptance of equilibrium, inert disregard of the divine unrest, means death in the long run. Among the unconscious creatures the race that, as a whole, chooses the wrong path is doomed.

And this is equally true of races of men. All the processes of evolution are vastly hastened when the plane of self-consciousness is reached, but, as we have seen[2], we have no reason to suppose that the laws which govern progress are changed: we have no reason to suppose that the acceptance of equilibrium is less fatal to the race than it was before; rather, we have much evidence to the contrary. Many dead and dying branches still retain their union with the Tree of Human Life, but they cannot remain for ever: either they will fall, dislodged by their own decay, or else

[1] This is only true, of course, if we admit the argument of Chapter I, that the environment as a whole is one and continuous, and that the laws of progress are uniform throughout; and even so, there is clearly another great factor to be considered—the factor of voluntary action.

[2] Ch. I.

some cataclysmic shock, some hurricane, will hurl them down. The ground beneath is strewn with the débris of former civilisations.

But there *is* a difference, and a vital one, between the evolution of the beasts and of man. With man, for the first time, we have to face the problem of the individual, the person. The failures in the lower stages are race-failures only. The unconscious animal is not a self. Its failure or success is not the failure or success of an individual, but rather indicates the failure of a race. We cannot consider the individual jelly-fish as a person, but only as a unit. The success or failure of *a* jelly-fish has no meaning to us: we can only appreciate the success or failure of jelly-fish, for a jelly-fish has not a self-determining consciousness which knows itself. At most there is the matrix in which consciousness might have been precipitated, if the jelly-fish had not specialised as a jelly-fish, but had evolved into a man.

And again, the rate of progress in the lower stages is too slow for us to recognise any general change in the race (apart from the variations that are constantly present) during the few generations we can observe, except such changes as are brought about by the purposeful intervention of man. We cannot tell, except by a survey of the whole animate world since the beginning, which are the successes and which the failures; only by comparison can we judge of the

degree of success. We can see dimly that each stage is an end in itself, as well as being perhaps a beginning; of value *as* an end only when it is also capable of being a beginning; when it does not represent the last paving-stone of a blind-alley. By a great effort of imagination we can conceive the importance of each individual organism. But it is only by projecting our own personality into it that we can look on it as a self. A self must be conscious of itself, and if there is any degree of self-consciousness in the lower animals, we do not understand or know it. Group-consciousness, community-consciousness, one mind among many individuals, we know: the Ants and Bees and Wasps undoubtedly have it, and the Termites; higher up we find it, among Beavers and Rooks; we find traces of it perhaps in the tribal consciousness of primitive races. Race-consciousness also there may be: perhaps instinct is one manifestation of it: but here we have very little to go upon. A dog or a horse or a cat, too, may be half a self, for *πάντα ῥεῖ*, Nature draws no hard and fast lines elsewhere, and non-self most probably passes into self by imperceptible gradations[1]. But certainly

[1] One difficulty which puzzles many people—the appearance of reason and a rudimentary moral sense in some animals—seems to me a somewhat artificial one. Given the One continuous Environment, there is no reason why the super-sensual influences might not be able to act on organisms which had responded in quite different ways to other environmental stimuli, and were so, on the physical side, very differently constituted. In most cases the organism would not be

as a rule it is only by projecting our own personality into animals that we come to look upon them as selves. They are individuals, but they are only persons just in so far as they recognise themselves as persons, and the measure of self-consciousness in the brute-world is almost certainly very small, even in the few cases where we may suspect it to exist. But we know so little about the personality even of a dog, if it exists, that we must be content to let the whole question of half-developed personality rest. ω

The caravan-route of evolutionary progress is strewn with the bones of the weak, and only those who are fit survive to reach even the next caravanserai. We can pity even while we hasten on; we can see how they

capable of any great response, and so would remain lowly developed on the mental—even possibly the spiritual—side. I cannot see that the physical form of a man is the only one that could possibly be the suitable basis for the development of spiritual faculties. In our world, doubtless, it is the only one that has proved adequate, except in a very rudimentary form; but there may be other worlds, and other sheep that are not of this fold, who are being brought. If so, to our eyes they might seem very strange creatures, with quite a different physical substratum from our own, but yet with souls, perhaps far more beautiful souls than most of ours. This is pure speculation, but the thought is I think valuable, if only to explain the sporadic appearance of mind and spirit in the brute creation, which so audaciously seem to claim a share in man's prerogative. Of these half-selves we cannot speak now; we know nothing; we can only believe that somehow it is all right, for them as well as for us. We have always the mystery of the failures: the mystery of the half-souls—the half-successes—whether animal or human, is greater still. But yet, *οὐχὶ πάντες εἰσὶν λειτουργικὰ πνεύματα*;

helped us on our journey while they could, not voluntarily, it is true, but none the less really; and we feel that something is owing to them for their unconscious service—some recompense, or at least some recognition. George Adam Smith draws attention to the fact that "Isaiah and Paul, chief apostles of the two covenants, both interrupt their magnificent odes upon the outpouring of the Spirit, to remind us that the benefits of this will be shared by the brute and unintelligent creation," noting the parallelism between Isaiah xi. 6—9 and Romans viii. Westcott also (*Lessons from Work*, p. 44) remarks on the parallelism of the thought of Romans viii. with the Apocalyptic Vision of the Four Living Creatures. And Jesus said not a sparrow falls, but the Father knoweth and careth. We do not know, though we do care, but God both knows and cares. Our minds are not competent even to attempt to reason about these intermediate stages, merging imperceptibly into one another, just because we think in categories. Therefore we must leave them wholly out of account. What concerns us now is that we certainly have to deal with personality in man, while, on the whole, it is true to say that we have not to deal with personality in the lower orders.

Men, then, as races, seem to be subject to the old law that suppression or repression of the vital impulse is inevitably followed by extinction. It has been truly

said that in Nature there are no rewards nor punishments, only consequences. But men as consciously-creative beings are individually responsible for the tendency of their nation: the nation moves as it is urged by the individuals. If its course is towards destruction it is the majority of its individuals that is responsible[1]: *individual* sin becomes the race's undoing when the individuals are free and self-determining. If then, as the theologian avers, there is a just God, the *final* debt must be paid by the guilty individuals, although all alike pay the natural penalty of race-extinction[2]. For individual sin, as we have seen, tends to the undoing of the whole world-plan, "making the promises of God of none effect" by acceptance of the opposing forces around.

Here then, for the first time, we find individual responsibility and conscious individual opposition to good, which is opposition to God. And at once we have to deal with quite a new thing. Before, we had

[1] It would perhaps be truer, though less grammatical, to say "are responsible." "There is a higher law in grammar not to be put down by Andrews and Stoddard," says O. Wendell Holmes in *The Autocrat*.

[2] The fact that progressive races on the main road of development are occasionally wiped out by reactionary races, seems to me *nihil ad rem* in regard to the argument. And it is certainly true to say that, though, for example, the Albigenses as a people were practically extinguished, they aided the evolution of the race as really as if they had survived. Indeed, we have in these cases some suggestion of the freeing of the spirit: the animal's *lampada tradam* is at best physical, but here the spiritual progress is passed on, in spite of physical destruction.

mistakes, now we have sins. Union with a perfect God becomes at once impossible—all theological systems recognise this, as we saw in the last chapter—when positive evil has become ingrained in the nature of any being.

Yet if, as we believe, man came into being at the urging of the Divine Love, which craves for expansion through the creative power of mutual relationship, some solution must be found. The Divine will cannot be frustrated, yet the human will cannot be compelled. Freedom has been granted, because without freedom there is no love. That freedom cannot now be bound—indeed, even if it could, the Divine will would be frustrated, for the free love which alone gives value to the inter-relations between God and Man would be for ever made impossible. One single act of constraint would change the whole course of a man's life in some measure, and so the relationship between constrained and constrainer must be changed for ever. It may be a small matter, judged by human standards, but judged by the ultimate standard of absolute perfection, that one act has made all the difference between perfection and imperfection. What escape is there from this *impasse*? For man, none. But for God?

And here we approach the deepest mystery of the Universe, that has ever baffled men's understanding, and that, in the light of the evolutionary theory of sin,

becomes at first sight even less intelligible than before. It is a mystery we cannot solve, because we are men, but it is a mystery we can begin to solve. We can at least hope to find the lines along which a solution must be sought, because we have the God-nature in us. A poor mathematician may be able to reduce a problem into such a form that he can say, "Had I the requisite skill in manipulation I could solve this." There is then no arrogance, no irreverence, in searching for the method of solution, even though we know that the problem in its entirety is hopelessly beyond us.

If we recall what we have said about sin, it becomes clear that a man who is living a life of "sin" in the sense in which we have used it—that of opposition to the inward urgings—may be a very respectable man withal, possessing a whole Pantheon of his own full of images of Respectability, Mammon, Good Manners, Social Virtues, Political Creeds, and the like, to which sacrifices are paid with full ceremonial rites; his conscience may be narcotically peaceful; and yet that man be putting all his weight in the scale of anti-progress. He may not be conscious of it; he may never remember having experienced any tussles with his conscience: there are many who have adopted the moral drug-habit from very early years: but at one stage or another there is a conscious spurning of ideals; and woe betide the race whose members spurn their ideal. It suffers, it decays; and the decay of a

nation means the checking of progress for centuries. Another nation has to be brought up to a suitable stage of development before there can be further progress. Centuries of struggle were needed before the philosophic insight of the Greeks and the mechanical knowledge of the Egyptians, for example, were re-attained. So true is this, that some writers see in human life but a cycle, ever returning on itself[1]; though perhaps a spiral would give a truer analogy, and the waves of the sea on a rising tide, one still truer. Not only does the nation itself decay, but the whole evolutionary movement is checked.

The same happens in the lower stages of animal life, but here there is no *conscious* choice of the worse, and so, no sin. The essence of sin is this:

> "Video meliora proboque;
> Deteriora sequor."

Individual sin, then, being individual opposition to what seems to be the end for which man has come to be, is voluntary individual antagonism to the will of God. And by this antagonism the personal man must forfeit all union with the Personal God—not only all *claim* to union, but all *possibility* of union.

Most certainly there *is* need of atonement—or rather, since that word has become "polarised," to use Wendell Holmes' expression, and sets along a definite meridian in our mind, let us at present use the

[1] Petrie, *Revolutions of Civilisation.*

equivalent word re-union—between God and man, unless the world is to be a fruitless, unsuccessful effort of the Creator. The granting of potential freedom constituted a kind of κένωσις of the Godhead, by self-limitation; but this κένωσις was destined to end in a πλήρωμα that should embrace not only the Godhead, but His perfected creation, within an all-pervading unity of Love. Man, by his sin, made this πλήρωμα unattainable.

Let us now review what we have said.

So long as there was no self-consciousness, the creation was blameless. No punishments, in the strict sense of the word, followed on failure to progress; only consequences. And necessarily so, for the failures were race-failures, the consequences, race-extinction. The individual was a unit, not a person: its life was governed by rigorous undeviating necessity. Creature of its environment, sport of contending events outside itself, its only duty lay in propagation. The rest was in other hands which worked with deadly precision. The race had another *rôle*. To it was entrusted the struggle against Fate. Its task was to enlarge the little cell in the bleak grey mass of circumstance in which its lot was cast; to seek a way of escape from the tangled *lianas* that threatened to choke it—deadly network of antecedent and consequent—that it might have room to move whither it would. This increasing race-freedom is of course only perceptible in the

individuals of widely separated generations[1]. Yet the race itself has many of the characteristics of an entity, ever progressing, and we have found it convenient to treat it as such.

But at last even the race itself achieves a considerable measure of freedom, by what we have called the "inturning" of the general consciousness on itself through which the individuals come to know themselves as selves, and by the studied, concerted action of its component individuals.

And here a digression is desirable in order to deal a little more fully with a point that we touched upon in Chapter II. We followed Bergson in identifying

[1] There may appear to be some contradiction between this argument (and similar ones used on pp. 74 and 136) and the unqualified statement on p. 42 that "for the organism itself there is some measure of indetermination, for the race, apparently, none." Careful consideration of the context will, however, show that the contradiction is only apparent. On p. 42 we were arguing that progress was inevitable, and must proceed, as a whole, along a determined path towards self-realisation. Individual groups of organisms might develop along their own lines, but most of these lines must eventually end in a *cul-de-sac*. Only along one line was complete self-realisation possible. In this sense there is no indetermination for the race: *life*, as a whole, must move along one path towards one goal.

In the present passage (and the others referred to above) a narrower field is under review. The races with which we are here dealing are the individual groups of organisms, and these do achieve some measure of indetermination.

Thus the apparent contradiction is seen to be due to the usage of the word "race" in two senses:—the *whole race* of living organisms, and *one special race* or group—a usage rendered almost inevitable by absence of definite words for these things in our language.

consciousness with the vital impulse. What then is its relation to what I have called the race-consciousness? It is difficult to answer this question. But, none the less, if we follow Bergson[1] in assigning an "unconscious consciousness," however rudimentary, to the units of the race, we are bound, I think, to recognise that there is some external evidence for the assumption that the aggregate of all the unit-consciousnesses of a race, or at least of a group, is a unity in itself, clearly purposive. I cannot see that on our hypothesis any other explanation of the hive-consciousness of bees and the like is admissible. And if we have these well-developed instances before us, there is at the least some justification for believing that a similar race- or group-consciousness may exist in other cases, becoming more and more tenuous the lower we descend, until the only justification we have for imagining its existence even as a latent factor lies in the fact that it is often manifested higher up in the scale, and in our belief in the continuity of the life-process. Although we have not stated it in so many words hitherto, this idea obviously underlies the identification of the vital impulse with consciousness which we, following Bergson, have made.

As far as I can see, part of the confusion that is said to exist in Bergson's usage of the terms "vital impulse and "consciousness" may be attributed to a

[1] E.g. *Creative Evolution*, p. 190, and many other passages.

lack of clearness in distinguishing the property of the individual in virtue of which it can bear and transmit the vital impulse, with the vital impulse itself. The first is individual, the second racial. The vital impulse urges the *race* to develop; but it can only act in virtue of the power of development inherent in each *individual*. The two interact, but they are not the same, though it seems to me that Bergson sometimes treats them as such. Perhaps the facts might be better expressed by using the term "consciousness" for the individual, "vital impulse" for the race; yet this is in many ways undesirable, as the two seem closely intertwined. At any rate, in the end the individuals recognise themselves as bearers of the power of development, not only for the race but for themselves. In other words, by recognising their claims and needs as individuals they come eventually to realise themselves, and so become selves. The consciousness has now become inturned upon itself, and the result is, as we have said, self-consciousness. Whether race self-consciousness too comes at all into being is at the very least doubtful: hive-consciousness and perhaps national consciousness *may* be manifestations of it: but it can never go far. And the reason is not far to seek. It is the individuals, not the race, that pass on the vital flame, it is in the individuals primarily that freedom exists; it is the individuals that become persons; and if we see purpose in the world, it is for the development of personality that the world came into existence.

A full discussion of the line of thought just indicated is however beyond the scope of this book, and, besides, is hardly germane to the matter in hand. For us the important point is to recognise that we are dealing with a wholly new thing when once the individual has recognised that there is a goal toward which the race is moving; that he is a self, and that he can choose to help or hinder.

The individual, not the race, becomes now of prime importance. For the race there are still mainly consequences, but for the individual, punishments. For just in so far as he recognises an ideal of any kind, so far he concedes that life is moving towards a goal: just in so far as he spurns that ideal, so far he is voluntarily opposing the progress of life, so far he is opposing the will of Him who gave that life, so far he is liable to the inevitable punishment of separation from God—a separation that must be absolute and complete, however small the sin, since between the Perfect and that which *can never become* perfect an impassable gulf is fixed. Man is for ever tainted with imperfection[1]. He can never enter into perfect union with God. Physical death must be the end; or if not, the personality must wander for ever incomplete, eternally banished from God by its incompleteness. The incompleteness, the imperfection, is not merely negative; it is not a lacuna that can be filled in, but

[1] See p. 137.

an integral part of his being. Therefore there seems no way out. Man has rejected the ideal that is implicit in the miracle of life, and so has declared himself out of sympathy with the will of God that is being fulfilled in life.

What possibility is there of re-union? What, viewed from this standpoint, seem to our limited minds the fundamental changes and needs before such re-union can be conceived as possible?

A new creation is needed. There must be a fresh creation to replace that which was marred. The flawed human will must be replaced by a whole human will.

God cannot do this; if He did, man's freedom would be infringed even by that constraining act of Love, and so the perfectness would not be restored, for perfect love must spring from perfect freedom.

Man cannot do it unaided; for the whole race is affected. Something like race-sin exists where the race is composed of self-conscious individuals, something that is closely parallel to the *original sin* of the earlier theologians. We postpone the consideration of this point until the end of this chapter, but it is necessary to refer here to the conclusion to which we shall come. The race being affected, the act of any man, or as we shall see, even of *all* men, could not re-establish it. Perfection has by man's own act passed eternally out of his reach.

If then any re-union is possible, God must do what

man cannot do; man must do what God cannot do—cannot, because God cannot contradict Himself: He cannot give man freedom and then withdraw it.

It is along these lines that we shall seek, not to solve the problem, but very tentatively, very reverently, to suggest one or two paths along which thought may pass towards a partial understanding of one aspect of the central Fact of the World's history. George Macdonald in his novel *Malcolm* puts these very wise words into the mouth of the schoolmaster: "If I knew of a theory in which was never an uncompleted arch or turret, in whose circling wall was never a ragged breach, that theory I should know but to avoid, such gaps are the eternal windows through which the dawn shall look in. A complete theory is a vault of stone around the theorist—whose very being yet depends on room to grow."

It is clear that no contradiction is involved between the fundamentals of sin and Atonement, as they appear when examined from the standpoint we have adopted, and as they appear to the theologian. Both agree in the absolute finality of the schism introduced into the cosmos by wilful sin; both agree that only by the co-operation of God and man can the schism be healed. But in one way our view of sin differs from that of the theologian, or of some theologians, in making the schism between God and man seem even more hopelessly incapable of healing, for we have said that even the Spirit of God cannot make it as though it was not. The will of man must co-operate with the Will of God:

only by the combined action of man and God, free and untrammelled on both sides, is any re-union even possible. This seems to point towards Anselm's view that God was not able to choose *freely* the method of Redemption, being limited by the necessity of the co-operation of man's will; and we shall find that our argument seems rather to suggest the strict Anselmian doctrine that the Death of Christ was the only possible means. It is incumbent on us however, especially in view of the limited scope of our discussion involved in the method adopted, to state clearly that so tremendous a doctrine is only put forward tentatively.

One point that has emerged very clearly in the course of the foregoing argument is that sin is an individual thing. The will that is set in opposition to the Divine Will is not primarily the will of the human race, but the wills of human persons. The sin therefore is not the sin of the race, but of the person.

We have yet to examine the effect of individual sin on the race. True, we showed that when a race as a whole over-specialises in wrong directions, or fails to progress, by the action of the inevitable law of development it must perish; and also that the surrender of a nation's ideals, the dedication to luxury or vice of any large percentage of its members, is for that nation the beginning of the end. But we have not considered the question of the effect of the sins of men upon the human race as a whole. Yet these cannot but be of

consequence. Every man at some time or another chooses to do something which he knows is not right, decides with open eyes to follow a course of action which he knows is not the best, because it is easier or pleasanter. Every member of the human race is tainted with sin, and so is alienated from God. What follows? Not physical death. Death was the worst evil known to men who had no clear belief in immortality; for whom it meant extinction or vague wandering in a misty land of banishment; to whom the knowledge of God seemed only possible while they were in the flesh; and to such, death naturally seemed the consequence of sin. But to us, who know more of the wonders of God's working, death is not so terrible. We know now that it is an essential part of the great Progress by which will triumphs and is perfected.

The book Genesis is an allegory of the dawn, and in it we find the World a Garden, into which death and sorrow find entrance by man's sin. The Bible ends with another allegory; in it the World is a City. There too death is the consequence of sin, but it is not physical death; it is the second Death—banishment from God, and everlasting bitterness. Not extinction: modern thought leads us to believe that the extinction of personality is impossible, and this is certainly the teaching of Christ. *This* is far worse—the death of the power of becoming like God, the eternal impossibility of entering into the communion of Love. There are many stages of progress, many scenes of trial; but at

length the new city, foursquare and glorious, the type of perfection, descends from Heaven. Humanity is made complete and dwells with God. But some can never enter into the Holy City; nothing unclean can enter in: for those who are banished by, not *for*, but *by*, their sins there is the second Death.

The Bible, that wonderful text-book of Evolution, then teaches that death *is* the consequence of sin—but it is the death of the soul—not the death of the body.

And biological science teaches us that race-extinction is the consequence of failure to progress. The argument of the preceding chapters, carrying this farther, shows that voluntary inertia and the dedication to low ideals alike spell ruin for the nation. Moreover for the individual, sin means alienation from God, and every individual man sins.

What then of the whole human race? Is it just or reasonable to speak of race-sin? While there is no race-indetermination, there can be no race-sin: nothing worthy of punishment, that is. There will only be consequences. And we have seen that, for life as a whole, there is no indetermination. The life marches on, unfaltering, towards freedom. Races fail, and are thrust aside, but others spring up to take their place.

None the less, each *individual* race has some of the characteristics of a definite entity, possessing a sort of consciousness together with traces of indetermination. We must nevertheless remember that unless there is *self*-consciousness, unless there is the

actual recognition of an end in the being or entity itself, which end may be achieved more rapidly by voluntary effort, there can be no moral import in action, and so there can be no sin. Whether a group or race can ever be said to become self-conscious, whether there is such a thing as national self-consciousness apart from the minds of the component individuals, or whether the hive-consciousness is in any degree self-consciousness, is at the very least unproven. And we saw reason to think that if it exists at all, it cannot reach any but the most elementary stage of development (see p. 130 *supra*).

But none the less the human race is doomed as a whole, since men as a whole have set their will against progress. Perhaps this statement requires some further explanation. We have seen that every man has sinned, and sin is wholly antipathetic to the nature of God. But progress is now in the mental and spiritual plane, as far as man is concerned, and is tending ever towards spirituality; therefore by this alienation from God the final achievement of spiritual perfection is delayed, or rather *rendered impossible.* In these last words lies the answer to the objection that might be raised that one or two small sins, or even big ones, on the part of every single human being, would not necessarily imply that the whole tendency of the race was anti-progressive, that the vital impulse was being checked and stifled. *Just as a small variation in a race of organisms lower*

down in the scale may, if not commit that race to a definite line of advance, at any rate make some other line of advance for ever impossible; so here, the commission of sins makes the end for which progress exists, complete union with God, for ever impossible, since the attainment of perfection is no longer open to a race which has in it the taint of something that is positively, not negatively, imperfect. And all men sin.

So far then three points have emerged clearly in regard to sin in the individual and the race.

(1) The individual has sinned, and can only be re-united to God by his own free act and will.

(2) Such re-union is impossible for him, because he is tainted with positive evil, which can never have place in God's Love.

(3) The whole human race also is for ever alienated from God, being imbued with the taint of imperfection, which makes impossible the destined growth of the race to perfection. It is imperfect now, for the present stage, and all future stages of progress will be tainted with the same imperfection.

It will be seen that in this last we have something closely analogous to the somewhat discredited doctrine of Original Sin. And this something is quite different from Tennant's negative description of it as the inherited passions and tendencies of our brute-ancestry. It is positive; not exactly race-sin; but race-alienation from God.

CHAPTER VII

THE ATONEMENT

We must now turn more directly to the question of the Atonement. "The whole creation groaneth and travaileth together until now,...and ourselves also... waiting for the adoption, to wit the redemption of our body," says St Paul. And again, "For I know that in me, that is, in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me, but to do that which is good is not." And again, by implication, "Now is the mystery of evil revealed in the body[1]." It is in and through the body that the soul has sinned; it is the body that is being dragged up in opposition to the cosmic forces of decay amid which it moves. If then the plan of God, that man should grow into the likeness of God by gradual achievement of freedom from the trammels of his material life, is to be perfected in spite of failure and sin, it is in the body that redemption must come. The mystery of evil has been revealed in the body: in the body then good must be revealed, triumphant and victorious. But how? We shall find some guidance if we think over the conclusions we have formed about the nature of sin. By

[1] Cf. Rom. vii. and 2 Thess. ii.

sin, which is in its effect equivalent to the acceptance of equilibrium among the beasts, the progress of man is checked. But there is more. Just as a step in the physically "wrong" direction meant a limited physical evolution for the beast, terminating sooner or later in a *cul-de-sac*; so sin, which is a step in the morally "wrong" direction, means a limited moral evolution for man, terminating in a *cul-de-sac* which is inevitable moral and spiritual imperfection. In both cases the vital impulse must eventually meet with something that bars further progress, and, unprogressing, die.

The only hope lies *either* in the upspringing of a new vital impulse which is *not* hampered and blocked, *or else* in the freeing of man from the consequences of his own wrong acts.

The first alternative we may dismiss. Obviously it is equivalent to an interruption of the whole process by which freedom has been reached. A new vital impulse means the supersession, ultimately the destruction, of the soul of Evolution. The unity of the thread that runs through it all is destroyed at once. No one can say that this is impossible. But it involves a solution of continuity in the plan of God. True, it is due to man's sin, and so it may be said that the continuity has already been destroyed by man. In a sense this is the case; but to admit it does not entail such consequences as the above demands. To say that God accepts the destruction of His original plan, and is

compelled to acquiesce in the final impossibility of oneness and uniformity in the process by which man is to learn to know Him and grow to be like Him, at least involves us in very grave difficulties. Any other explanation that does not lead to such difficulties is surely to be preferred.

The second alternative raises no such problem. If we have argued truly, sin, like every other evolutionary "mistake," restricts the possibilities of development, so that eventually man must fall victim to the forces of determination: actually, if a fitter race ousts him; practically, if he survives physically, but reaches a stage where further progress—in his case probably moral or spiritual—is blocked. But if by any means the self-imposed check on his freedom could be removed, the *consequences* of his sin would be done away, and *if, and only if, his will was set towards progress, he would be able to go forward as if the sin had never been.* Here is no limitation of man's freedom. His will is needed: he can only go forward in his spiritual development by his own effort. But he is no longer debarred from the attainment of perfection. The imperfection which we saw in the last chapter had become inherent in him is now no longer an essential part of his nature. Negatively he is not perfect, but he is no longer positively imperfect: he is not debarred from attaining perfection eventually. And so the barrier between God and man is done away.

Man then could regain the potentiality of absolute perfectness, if on the one hand God by some means freed him from the "consequences" of his sin, and on the other hand he himself set his own will towards perfection. We are then faced with the question—What means could God adopt (I speak it reverently) to give him this freedom?

Three points must be borne in mind:

(1) That individually men are tainted with sin.

(2) That "positive" imperfection has become a taint in the race.

(3) That the will of man must be unhampered.

As we have said, this last points to the Anselmian position that God is not wholly free to choose the method of Atonement. He is limited to something that, while blotting out the consequences of sin, may yet arouse man's will to ideals and effort.

Now it is obviously true that the answer to the whole question must be sought in the plane of spiritual things. We have seen how the response of the organism to its environment has gradually shifted from the physical to the spiritual plane, until by now physical progress in man has almost ceased. The problem with which we are now confronted is, and has always been regarded as, a purely spiritual one; and we can only seek its solution in the realm of spiritual things. But if our argument up to this point has been just; if we are right in our belief that the cosmic environment is

essentially spiritual and that only the organism which grows to respond most fully to this environment can be truly said to be successful; further, if we can only find a meaning in life when we interpret it in this manner; then surely there is no possible objection to our attacking the problem from the other—the spiritual—end. Having argued that there is complete continuity between the physical and spiritual growth, there can be no inconsistency in following the universal precedent by dealing with the last stage of our argument from the spiritual standpoint. There may appear to be a superficial break in sequence, but we shall really only be taking up the other end of the Ariadne-thread along which the living organism, entombed and constrained in the dark mazes of the earth in which it had birth, has been feeling its way out into the freedom of heaven. The thread is one, and we shall reach the point at which man lost his hold of it.

It is in and through the body that the soul has sinned—the body, in and through which the soul has come to be; and it is in and through the body that redemption must come if there is to be continuity. It must come in and through the body by the operation of man's will; but first it must come in and through the body by the operation of God's grace.

To attempt any discussion of the true meaning of the Atoning Death of Christ would be wholly outside the avowed intention of this book. And even if it were not so,

it would be an act of unpardonable presumption when so much that is great has been written. In its fulness, this must always lie beyond the thoughts of man: "We can but gaze at the outer fringe of His tabernacle." Even so, the thought of nearly two thousand years has made clear and intelligible much that was too difficult for our forefathers in the faith; in the books to which we have referred, and many more, we have a vast treasure-house of noble thought and patient search. As the years go on, and new discoveries open up new vistas to new generations, the mind of man perceives new wonders in the great Mystery. We are always proving its breadth, length, depth, and height, for, in whatever direction human thought is moving, fresh light comes as the Atonement is examined in connection with the new knowledge. This emerged very clearly as we reviewed the history and development of the Atonement doctrine.

The best approach to understanding which man has yet reached is to be found in such works as those of Moberly and Lofthouse. Our purpose now is not to set forth an attempted explanation of the method by which Christ's death frees men from their sins, but to show that a re-union between God and man was needed, even if sin is but an evolutionary "mistake"—is in a sense the anachronistic survival of brute instincts. The death of Christ is an historic fact: its significance is accepted by all Christian peoples: in some manner it reconciles man with God. For us this is enough.

But although these things are outside the limits we have set ourselves, yet it is important that we should consider some points in the Passion of the Saviour with regard to their bearing on the theory we have formulated of the evolutionary nature of sin; not aiming at a connected theory, but briefly setting out a few thoughts that seem suggestive.

Christ suffered and was buried. Pain and death were necessary to progress, as they had always been. His life and death constituted the apotheosis of pain, showing it in its true light as the only possible means of progress. By His life and death alike He showed how false was any hope that man might be exempt from the groaning and travailing, from the birth-pangs of new powers and new ideals. There is no rest and no ease for that which is becoming. Only when that which is perfect is come shall that which is in part be done away, and with it the dissatisfied yearnings of the spirit that is seeking to wrest itself free from the trammels of the past. In this too Christ showed Himself true man: the Crown of manhood, yet the Man of sorrows; making clear revelation that even perfect Man was not finished. We know that even He was not free from the limitations imposed by humanity.

The spirit of man must still be liberated from bondage. Matter, limited and determined, in which he had come to be, must be left behind at the last, and the free spirit must enter into full communion

with the Spirit that gave it power to be. Until then man could never be perfect, never satisfied, never wholly free from strife and pain. "Touch Me not, for I am not yet ascended to My Father," said the Risen Saviour. Do not these words mean that no spirit is perfected until it has thrown off the ties of earth and has entered into full communion with the Father of Spirits? By Himself entering into the pangs of spirit fettered by matter; the nightmare-struggle of the creature, reaching out into the Beyond and always held back; the unceasing grapple with limitations; God becomes one with His creation. Union could only be perfected so: the Incarnation was part of the world-plan of God from the beginning, as the Scotists taught; and the Incarnation must be a κένωσις, must be full of pain. So pain receives its true appreciation, and sentimental hedonism is for ever discredited. Job has his answer. To the student of history, as to the student of biology, the statement that ease and certainty presage decay is a commonplace. Time after time is this set forth in the story of the Nations. A wave of materialism sweeps in upon the over-prosperous community; luxury merges into licence; spirituality dies, morality declines; unless some vivifying stress intervenes, the very life of the community is endangered. As with the beasts, so with men: struggle leading to higher things is the condition of survival. Spiritual faculties and spiritual insight flourish in the

atmosphere of strife and pain. And Christ came to share humanity with men; to teach the dignity and true worth of suffering, and by revelation of the Personality of God, to reveal the completeness of the Union that was to be. *Pain is not the result of sin, but the condition of progress.* Where there is incompleteness there must be pain, as we have said, and in the Incarnation God identifies Himself, in the Person of His Son, with the pain of the world's becoming.

But there was no need for the isolation of man from God. There was no need for that terrible cry, "Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani." That was the consequence of sin. All the unnecessary, retrogressive pain of sin was borne by Christ beside: not only the necessary pain of becoming, full of hope and promise, but the appalling, hopeless pain of isolation.

We have already investigated the nature of sin at considerable length, and it became clear that, being the voluntary renunciation of struggle and discomfort, sin is really a kind of over-emphasised individualism. The evolutionary process is essentially altruistic: that is what Nietzsche forgot. Unconsciously, the individual lives for the race. And the still-unconscious rejection of altruism by the members of a race, which is implied in the acceptance of equilibrium, is that race's undoing. Granted, the whole process *is* unconscious. Granted, each individual organism responds to the stimuli of its environment in such a way as to

satisfy its own needs. Still, under all lies the fact that higher races are reared on the foundations of the past. In the vital impulse which urges progress there is teleology, and teleology means altruism. And man knows and recognises this in his own case. As soon as he seeks personal ease and pleasure, not caring for the future of the race, he is sinning, for over-individualism means ruin to a nation, as he well knows.

Undoubtedly, evolutionary progress is the triumph of altruism. And in the Incarnation this was pointed, made clear. But the altruism of God is utterly unlimited. Not only does He identify Himself with the pain of the world's becoming, in order to complete the unity of the spiritual world and to assume before mankind the Headship of all the spiritual hierarchy; but He takes upon Himself the awful burden of suffering that sin has brought into the world. And by entering into His Death in a spiritual manner man accepts the underlying altruism of the universe, rejecting for ever the idol of individual profit that sin had set up for him to worship.

But, as we have seen, Christ's death meant more than this. It was not merely an object-lesson in perfect love and self-sacrifice; it did not merely teach men the awful gravity of sin. He did not suffer merely in order that we might be exempted from the last extremity of suffering. It was not merely that the law of righteousness had to be vindicated. The object was

not merely to draw men back to their allegiance by the strength of personal appeal. All these had part in that great Act of love, but there was far more. The barrier between God and man was done away—*how* we shall never fully understand. In the mystery of the Passion Christ identified Himself in the name of the whole human race, as its rightful representative and head, with the true principle of evolution, its fundamental altruism, and took away the circumscribing wall that fettered the free development of man—the wall set up by the race-rejection of ideals. He removed the taint of sin from the race. But only on one condition. The man is free: his will is, and must remain, unfettered by anything except the katabolic forces amid which it found birth. Only by willing recognition of the great work of Love, only by glad, urgent acceptance of the power of growth into perfect freedom conferred in the Redemption, can man attain that union with the Godhead for the sake of which, by the struggle of countless ages, he has come to be.

If he accepts, the race barrier is broken down: he identifies himself with the world-altruism that Jesus came to vindicate, and he is, so, free to put his will to the right use, being no longer debarred from perfectness by his humanity. We cannot, I repeat, understand how this comes about, but we can see that God has vindicated His world-plan in vindicating the altruism that underlies it; we can see that there is no break

in the continuity of the process by which man is to become like God. And man's will is utterly unhampered by the death of Christ. He is as free as he was before to seek greater freedom, and no freer. He receives none of the benefits of the Passion except by using his own volition. There *has* been an intervention in the order of things, so to speak, from the outside, but this intervention has only confirmed the continuity of the world-process, and has left man's will untouched. And these, we saw, were the needs in the Atonement.

So far in this chapter we have left the question of individual sin untouched. Men sin every day. If every sin, however small, in any degree limits freedom, making imperfection inevitable, these limitations must be constantly removed: there must be perpetual atonement. God's part in the Act of reunion must be constantly renewed, as well as man's; so at least it would seem. Without presuming to say that this is certain or proven, I would point out its suggestiveness when taken in connection with those passages in the Bible which represent Christ as *continually* making offering of Himself, of His Passion, for our sins: perplexing sayings, which yet must have represented some definite thought in the mind of the writer: sayings not by any means confined to one or two (e.g. Rom. viii. 34; Heb. vii. 25; 1 John ii. 1 and cf. Rom. viii. 26, 27).

These passages seem to suggest a general consensus

of belief on the matter. And, taken in the light of Moberly's view of the work of the Holy Spirit in the Atonement, the whole idea is singularly full of meaning (cf. Chapter v. p. 98). By the continual presentation of the sacrifice of Christ; by the agonised pleadings of the Spirit, "Who ever liveth to make intercession for us with groanings that cannot be uttered"; by the ever-present pain of Him who said, "Inasmuch as ye did it not unto the least of these my brethren, ye did it not unto Me"; by the eternal, self-sacrificing love of the Godhead; man is delivered from the consequences of his *repeated* sinful acts. But what we said of race-alienation applies equally to the sins of the individual. Only by turning willingly to God can the sins a man commits not separate him eternally from God.

What then of those who have never heard of Christ? What of those who, perhaps through asymmetric development—the hypertrophy of one faculty, leading to atrophy of others—perhaps through nurture, find it impossible to believe on Him? What of those, the vast majority, neither saints nor wholly sinners; urged by half purposes of good; filled with great purposes never completed; who strive sometimes and sometimes are careless; double-minded men, unstable—yet not in all their ways; what of us? Without the full eager acceptance of Christ's gift there can be no union with God; for so long as man is tainted with positive

imperfection, so long is he *necessarily* barred out from God. If a man is to be "saved" he *must* accept Christ. That is certain, if Christianity means anything. But there is no time-limit set. God is the Timeless One. Death is a great physical change, certainly, but it is *not* the severing of personal continuity. In personality lies the natural (as opposed to the revealed) promise of immortality. To the person, death is only a change: for some it may be the change to the Imago, but for some there must surely be other Larval existences.

> "There shall never be one lost good! What was shall live as before;
> The evil is null, is nought, is silence implying sound;
> What was good shall be good, with for evil, so much good more;
> On the earth the broken arcs, in heaven the perfect round.
> All we have willed or hoped or dreamed of good shall exist;
> Not its semblance but itself—"

As long as there is any good in a man Christ's death can save him. He must accept it; he must bend his will towards perfection, or he can never fully enter into the Fellowship of the Holy Ghost, he can never attain the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ, which is the stature of perfect manhood. But God is merciful and Time is nothing. We know nothing by revelation, though we do know what St Paul thought about the matter; but we are none the less sure that those too "in whose silver is much metal base" will learn to know the Father, and be gathered

into the embrace of His love. God is not less merciful, less loving, less just than we are.

In this thought is there any incentive to laxity? Surely and emphatically, no!

> "Who sins in hope, and sinning, says
> 'Sorrow for sin God's judgment stays!'
> Against God's Spirit he lies; quite stops
> Mercy with insult; dares, and drops,
> Like a scorched fly, that spins in vain
> Upon the axis of its pain,
> Then takes its doom, to limp and crawl,
> Blind and forgot, from fall to fall."

We must never forget that there *is* the Second Death. We must never forget that the good which is in every human being *can* be utterly rooted out. And what is so degrading as to trade on the long-suffering and love of another for mean ends? Above all we must never forget that each sin we commit in very truth inflicts suffering on God.

One thread runs through all the twisted skein of thought we have been trying to unravel. All down the ages the creature has been struggling to attain greater freedom. When Will appeared it was immediately bent to the same task by the imperious necessity of its own nature. Freedom and will were to be the goal of the evolutionary strife. By sin the will was warped, the freedom circumscribed. But in the Incarnation we find not only the Pattern of what man

was to be, but a means of attaining it. The consequences of sin are done away; yet there is no break of continuity in the world-process, no interference with the freedom man has attained.

Again, in Christ was revealed, not Absolute Perfection, but the perfection of manhood; not absolute freedom of will, but the perfection of manhood's freedom and will. In Him we see fulfilled that which the ages had been slowly bringing into being: in Him material evolution finds its consummation. As far as is possible for man He is free, and His will is wholly set towards good. Of absolute freedom He emptied Himself "when He became man." He came, not to destroy the past, but to fulfil it and to interpret it in Himself. He puts before man the Perfect Law of Liberty—Freedom, ever increasing unto the Perfect Day.

The keynote of the Eastern religions is eventual escape from freedom by absorption. The keynote of Christianity is ever-increasing freedom of personality: the acquiring of powers, and of the responsibility that powers bring—powers that may be used in better service, truer love, and deeper worship of God. Increasing freedom is also the keynote of Evolution.

Of all religions, Christianity alone falls into line with the Evolutionary history of the world, for both have the same end to attain. With the Gnostic doctrine of antagonism between matter and spirit—an

antagonism reaching right back into origins—Christianity was brought to grips with the principle which was to make shipwreck of the other religions by making them unprogressive. But the danger was avoided, and now we are reaping the fruits of the wisdom of the early Fathers. Every day the uniformity and continuity of God's working comes out more clearly; every day we realise more in how complete a sense we men are built on the foundations of the past. And the freedom of manhood finds at once its full expression in, and derives its possibility from, the life and death of Christ. In Him we find a sure and certain hope that the shackles of the rigid forces amid which life came to birth, from which life, through countless ages, has been winning free, shall one day cease to fetter us.

"Remember, Lord, thou hast not made me good.
Or if thou didst, it was so long ago
I have forgotten—and never understood
I humbly think. At best it was a crude,
A rough-hewn goodness, that did need this woe,
This sin, these harms of all kinds fierce and rude,
To shape it out, making it live and grow.

But thou art making me, I thank thee, sire.
What thou hast done and doest thou know'st well,
And I will help thee:—gently in thy fire
I will lie burning; on thy potter's wheel
I will whirl patient, though my brain should reel;
Thy grace shall be enough the grief to quell,
And growing strength perfect through weakness dire."

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